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CHRIST'S SOUL-SEARCHING PARABLES

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Christ's Soul-Searching Parables

Evangelistic Sermons on the Parables of Jesus

By
LOUIS ALBERT BANKS, D. D.
"Author of Bible Soul-Winners;" "Wonderful Bible Conversions;" "The New Ten Commandments," etc.

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TO
MY WIFE,
FLORENCE AIKEN BANKS,
MY MOST SYMPATHETIC AND INSPIRING
CRITIC, THIS VOLUME IS
GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

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I

THE ARCHITECT, THE BUILDERS, AND THE FOUNDATION:

Christ's Story of the Two Builders

"Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof."—Matthew 7: 24-27.

THIS story sounds very natural when coming from the Carpenter of Nazareth. Christ was at home here. From boyhood He had worked in a carpenter shop and had to do with house-building. It ought to bring Jesus very close to working men and women who toil with their hands. Jesus knew what it meant to earn His bread by the sweat of His brow.

In this day, when such tremendous advance and blessing in better wages and better hours and improved conditions of toil are coming all around the world, it is of the highest importance to remember that back of all these revolutions and upheavals which are giving voice and power to labor is Jesus

Christ, with His seed-corn sayings of love and mercy and justice, that have accomplished more in doing away with the brutality and cruelty of the earlier ages than all else combined.

Edwin Markham is the author of a thought-provoking poem entitled *The Toiler Thinks*. More than twenty years ago I preached a sermon inspired by *The Man with the Hoe,* by the same author. *The Toiler Thinks* is evidently a sequel to *The Man with the Hoe.* It is not often that a poet lives to write a sequel to a world-famous poem on a theme so momentous.

We are told that Markham was inspired to write this poem from a study of Rodin's statue, *The Thinker,* a crouched and slowly awakening figure. Naturally, to the poet, this brought at once the inspiring suggestion that the stunned, stolid " man with the hoe " of his earlier poem was beginning at last to think.

As he first glances at the statue he sees only " the man with the hoe," and exclaims:

> *" Behold, this time-scarred Titan is*
> *The man come down from centuries—*
> *Forever beaten as the ox,*
> *Forever silent as the rocks."*

But as he studies the creation of the sculptor, he grasps something new; his imagination catches fire, and he cries:

> *" Behold, for Thought begins to stir*
> *This brain that was a sepulcher,*
> *Behold, this void abyss of night*

Struck by a timid beam of light—
This terror-shape, all brute and brawn,
This deep of darkness touched with dawn.
A star breaks on the chaos—lo,
The Shapes of Night begin to go!"

Now the poet's brain is all aflame with the infinite possibilities that may come from such an awakening. He puts himself in the monster-giant's place, and considers the questions that will naturally throb in that long-dormant brain. What questions he asks of the modern world!—he who so long has carried the world's loads; who, for so many centuries, has been used for cannon fodder at the whim of kings and aristocratic lords!—now he begins to give voice to the dynamic questions that our own present age must answer:

"Behold, O world, the Toiling Man,
Breaking at last the ancient ban;
For more than Eden's curse was his—
Mind-darkened down the centuries.
But after ages of blind toil,
Ages that made his soul the spoil
Of tyrants and of traitors—see,
He ponders . . . and the world is free!
Hark, for his awful questions throng
To thunder 'gainst the ancient wrong:
'Why am I bent with brutal loads?
Why am I driven on all roads?
Where is the laughter and the light
To cheer the workman in his might?
Why should my Godlike toil destroy
My world of beauty and of joy?
Why, since I feed the mouths of all,
Have I the careless crumbs that fall?
Why with these labor-blasted hands
Am I left homeless in all lands?
Why is the one that builds the world
Left as a dog in kennel curled?
Why is the one that beautifies
The kingdoms, robbed of seeing eyes?

Why am I hurled into hells of war,
I who have nothing to battle for?
Why should I fight for lords, indeed,
I who have only mouths to feed—
I who am only the earth's old slave,
Whose only gain would be a grave!'"

It is a great and timely poem by a great-souled man. Let us study its problems in the light of the teaching of Jesus, who is the supreme type of the working man who thinks.

I

This story gives us a rare opportunity to remember that our holy Christianity was, on the human side, the production of workingmen who actually earned their living by toiling with their hands, and that the roots of every tree of brotherhood that has proved a blessing to toiling men and women have their sprouting point in the New Testament story of Jesus Christ and His followers, who toiled for their daily bread, but whose brains were so productive in high and noble thoughts that they established Christianity among men and wrought a moral revolution in the world.

Christ's foster-father was a village carpenter, and Christ was brought up to that trade, and as a boy and young man, until thirty years of age, earned his daily bread and clothing by working in this manner.

Bishop Robert McIntyre, who, until he became a preacher, was a bricklayer, and who proudly kept up his membership in his " Bricklayers' Local Union " till the day of his death, has left us a song

revealing his thoughts about Jesus as a carpenter:

" I wish I had been His apprentice, to see Him each morning at seven,
As He tossed His gray tunic far from Him, the Master of earth and of heaven,
When He lifted the lid of His work-chest and opened His carpenter kit
And looked at His chisels and augers, and took the bright tools out of it,
While He gazed at the rising sun tinting the dew on the opening flowers,
And smiled as He thought of His Father, whose love floods this planet of ours.
When He fastened His apron about Him, and put on His workingman's cap,
And grasped the smooth haft of His hammer, to give the bent woodwork a tap,
Saying, 'Lad, let us finish this ox yoke. The farmer must put in his crop.'
Oh, I wish I had been His apprentice, and worked in the Nazareth shop.
Some wish they had been on Mount Tabor, to hearken unto His high speech
When the quick and the dead were beside Him, He holding communion with each.
Some wish they had heard the soft accents that stilled the wee children's alarms,
When He won the sweet babes from their mothers and folded them fast in His arms.
Some wish they had stood by the Jordan when holy John greeted Him there,
And seen the white dove of the Spirit fly down o'er the path of His prayer.
Some wish they had seen our Redeemer when into the basin He poured
The water, and, girt with a towel, the servant of all was the Lord;
But for me, if I had the choosing, oh, this would them all overtop,
To work all day steady beside Him, of old in the Nazareth shop.
These heavenly wonders would fright me, I cannot approach to them yet,
But oh, to have seen Him, when toiling, His forehead all jeweled with sweat.
To hear Him say softly, 'My helper, now bring me the level and rule.'

To have Him bend over and teach me the use of each artisan's tool.
To hear Him say, 'This is a sheep gate, to keep in the wandering flock,'
Or 'This is a stout oaken house sill. I hope it will rest on a rock.'
And sometimes His mother might bring us our meal in the mid-summer heat,
Outspread it so simply before us, and bid us to sit down and eat.
Then with both of us silent before Him, the blessed Messiah would stop
To say grace, and a tremulous glory would fill all the Nazareth shop."

And the brilliant and versatile Dr. Charles M. Sheldon, whose graphic novel, *In His Steps,* has given inspiration to millions of readers, also bursts into song at the sight of the Carpenter of Nazareth:

"If I could hold within my hand
The hammer Jesus swung,
Not all the gold in all the land,
Nor jewels countless as the sand,
All in the balance flung,
Could weigh the value of that thing
Round which His fingers once did cling.

"If I could have the table he
Once made in Nazareth,
Not all the pearls in all the sea,
Nor crowns of kings to be
As long as men have breath,
Could buy that thing of wood He made,—
The Lord of lords who learned a trade.

"Yea, but His hammer still is shown
By honest hands that toil,
And round His table men sit down,
And all are equals, with a crown
Nor gold nor pearls can soil;
The shop at Nazareth was bare—
But brotherhood was builded there."

The illustrations Jesus used throughout His

ministry were all of a type and character to give honor to labor and dignity to workingmen.

Just glance at the parables or stories of Jesus. Take this: "Behold a sower went forth to sow." In it Jesus proceeds to tell how some fell on hard-packed ground, and the crows and blackbirds got it; and some fell on stony ground, and some among thorns, and some in good, mellow soil. But the toiler is the center of the picture.

Look again! This time it is a hard-working woman: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Evidently Jesus had seen His own, sweet mother, Mary, doing that again and again in the house of the carpenter in Nazareth.

Next time it is a fisherman: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, which was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind."

Then again it is the story of a sheep-herder—a lonely job. This man had a hundred sheep and one strayed aside during the day and was lost. And after dark, the brave herder risks his life to find that lost sheep.

But I could go on for an hour simply reciting the condensed stories by which Jesus, in His great teaching, gave honor and dignity to the humblest toilers of his day.

And the men and women whom Christ chose to follow on and establish the Christian Church were

of the same type. He called four of them at one time—they were all fishermen—Peter, James, John and Andrew. The first three became, under the inspiration of Christ's teaching and example, strong and notable personalities. Peter became one of the most effective orators, in swaying great masses of people, the world has ever known; and all three of them wrote books the circulation of which has a thousand times exceeded that of the best sellers of our day and will last as long as humanity shall endure on the earth.

The greatest of all the great missionaries of the Early Church was Paul, and he was by trade a tent-maker. Paul had had better opportunities for education and culture than any of the others, and was easily the peer of the greatest minds of his own or any other age of the world's history, but he gladly worked at his trade as a tent-maker for years at a time, in order to earn his living, while he constantly used every opportunity to spread abroad the Gospel of the Carpenter of Nazareth.

So we are certainly within the truth when we claim that Christianity has been, from the beginning, the religion of workingmen and women who think.

II

The latter part of *The Toiler Thinks* gives us a vivid and inspiring prophecy of the awakening of the great unthinking mass of toilers in all lands,

and the results that shall flow from it. It is an inspiring vision:

> *"Behold, O world, the Toiler thinks!*
> *Now these old questions of the Sphinx*
> *Will have their answers. In this pause*
> *Are epochs, institutions, laws—*
> *The fall of Anarchy and Chance;*
> *The crumble of Brute circumstance;*
> *The building of the Comrade State,*
> *To be a new benignant Fate;*
> *The rise of Beauty to her throne*
> *When she shall make all hearts her own."*

But we must pause right there in the flight of our poet's fancy and remark that everything depends on who leads these toiling thinkers whether Beauty is to come to her throne or no. If Christ leads the thought of the awakening world of toilers, then we may be sure of a new and noble appreciation of beauty; but if some unfeeling monster of selfishness, like Lenine, who devastated Russia, shall dominate the thinking of the world of toilers, we shall have a far different future for the world.

A Russian writer, Alexander Kuprin, contributed to *The Atlantic Monthly* a searching and critical study of Lenine when he was still living and was the loudest bidder for Christ's place as leader of the toiling millions of the world. Listen to this carefully drawn verdict:

"Beauty and art do not exist for Lenine. He has never been interested in the question why some people are moved to ecstatic joy by Beethoven's Sonata, or a Rembrandt painting, or the Venus of Milo, or Dante's poetry. Listening to

such effusions, he would say with the condescending smile of a grown-up man speaking to children, 'Men sometimes waste their time on trifles. All these works of art that you speak of—what relation do they bear to the class-struggle and the future power of the proletariat?'"

Suppose these toilers, newly-quickened into thought, fall into the hands of a leadership like that, will Beauty rise to the throne? No, indeed! Christ must lead the thought of the toilers if the beautiful in life and art shall find its rightful appreciation.

Markham goes forth on his vision to watch the crumbling thrones of tyrants destroyed by the dynamite in these new thoughts of the toiling masses, and finds the consummation of the vision in the building of a new world government in "comrade song." It is a splendid conception, worthy of the author of *The Man with the Hoe:*

"Chained to the earth his body seems,
And yet his soul rides forth on dreams!
Tyrants, beware, for there is might
In dreams to shake the pillared night,
A power more potent to compel
Than all the dark decrees of hell.
He ponders, and the moment awes;
For the world's fate is in that pause.
All destinies are in that hush;
For in it is the power to crush
All the old battlements of wrong
And build the world in comrade song.
Ages the night was round him furled:
Behold the morning of the world!

"Tyrants, the morning is your doom:
Day yawns about you as a tomb;
Day is your cavern of the night.
Flee, then, before the coming light!
Flee, flee! This is the Toiler's hour:
Behold God coming down in power!

" Tyrants, the Tools begin to think:
Now all your lawless thrones will sink.
And a new world will softly rise
With laughter and with lyric cries.
Thought is God's thunder at the gate,
The Rhadamantine voice of Fate.
Today is judgment day: awake,
Upstart, O toiling millions, break
The shackles, lift the flag unfurled,
Rise, outcast monarchs of the world!"

This is a sublime finish to a great poem. But again I would emphasize that it all depends for its realization on whether Christ or a Lenine is to lead this new dynamic force. We all must realize that there is immeasurable power in these " outcast monarchs of the world " of whom Markham writes with the eloquence of genius; but whether that power shall be used as the Hebrew giant, Samson, used his in his outcast state, to pull down the temple of life upon himself as well as his enemies, or whether it shall be used to uplift the whole race and usher in the golden age of humanity, depends on the leadership which shall be followed.

If the Christian churches of America will rise to their full power in the spirit of the Carpenter of Nazareth, the tent-maker of Tarsus, and the fishermen of Galilee, and will seize for their divine Lord the leadership of the toiling world, the vision of Markham, and the earlier visions of Isaiah and Christ, shall come true, and " the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ."

III

One thing, which is the breath of life in the poem we have been studying, and which Christ made very clear in all the work and teaching of His life, we ought never to forget to emphasize—that the most dignified life in the world is that of the worker. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

John Greenleaf Whittier was as noble and honorable a personality when working at his trade as a shoemaker as when writing poems that helped to free the slave; and Abraham Lincoln was as wholesome and noble a specimen of lofty manhood when splitting rails in the Sangamon bottom in Illinois as when writing the Emancipation Proclamation that gave freedom to millions of ground-down toilers.

Work,—honest, needful work,—to bless the world and help humanity up the steeps of time toward God and heaven, is all honorable. Work of the hands, the brain, or the heart is alike divine, if serving a noble purpose. No one in our day, or, so far as I am able to recall, in any other day, has written with more inspiration and good cheer and enthusiasm the song of the worker than Angela Morgan. It has all the thrill of the bugle note calling to heroic and glorious combat for noble conquest:

"Work.
Thank God for the might of it,
The ardor, the urge, the delight of it—

Work that springs from the heart's desire,
Setting the brain and the soul on fire—
Oh, what is so good as the heat of it,
And what is so glad as the beat of it,
And what is so kind as the stern command,
Challenging brain and heart and hand?

"Work.
Thank God for the pride of it,
For the beautiful, conquering tide of it,
Sweeping the life in its furious flood,
Thrilling the arteries, cleansing the blood,
Mastering stupor and dull despair,
Moving the dreamer to do and dare,
Oh, what is so good as the urge of it,
And what is so glad as the surge of it,
And what is so strong as the summons deep,
Rousing the torpid soul from sleep?

"Work.
Thank God for the pace of it,
For the terrible, keen, swift race of it,
Fiery steeds in full control,
Nostrils aquiver to greet the goal.
Work, the power that drives behind,
Guiding the purposes, taming the mind,
Holding the runaway wishes back,
Reining the will to one steady track,
Speeding the energies faster, faster,
Triumphing over every disaster,
Oh, what is so good as the pain of it,
And what is so great as the gain of it?
And what is so kind as the cruel goad,
Forcing us on through the rugged road?

"Work.
Thank God for the swing of it,
For the clamoring, hammering, ring of it,
Passion of labor daily hurled
On the mighty anvils of the world.
Oh, what is so fierce as the flame of it?
And what is so huge as the aim of it,
Thundering on through dearth and doubt,
Calling the plan of the Maker out,
Work, the Titan; Work the friend,
Shaking the earth to a glorious end,
Draining the swamps and blasting the hills,
Doing whatever the Spirit wills—
Rending a continent apart,

To answer the dream of the Master heart,
Thank God for a world where none may shirk—
Thank God for the splendor of work."

IV

And let us not forget that we are, each one of us, builders. If we build on the rock of the great sayings of Jesus about God, His hatred of sin, His love and mercy to every sinner that repents, our temple of life will stand secure under all the storms of temptation or sorrow or disappointment that may beat upon it. But if we build upon our pride in the strength of our bodies, the brilliancy of our minds, the energy and efficiency of our own personality, we are like the foolish man who built his house on the sand, for all these things are only loaned us by our heavenly Father and will soon wear out and disappear.

My friend, you are a builder not for time only, but for eternity. You are building not for the warm, inspiring spring climate of youth, but for the hot, blistering winds and burning suns of the summer-time of middle age and the driving, freezing blizzards of old age and death. You are building not for this world only, but for that other world that shall endure forever.

Who is your architect? Is it Selfishness who is laying out your plans? Then beware! No one ever gave over the building of his life-temple to that architect who did not find out afterwards that it was built upon the shifting sands. Is Greed your architect? Then beware! Jesus tells us of

a man who employed that architect, and for a while he was very successful, until there came a time when he was so prosperous that his old architect, Greed, said, "We will have to build larger barns (Greed is a great barn-builder) to store your goods." And that rich builder said, "All right, go ahead, build what you see fit; and then, when the new barn is finished and filled in every granary and mow and stall, I will sit back satisfied and say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'" But Jesus says that on that very night God spoke to that barn-builder and said: "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou has prepared, whose shall they be?" And the comment of Jesus on that story is: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

My dear friend, I recommend an Architect who never yet has failed on the home temple of any man or woman. No temple of His was ever overthrown by life's storms. He is an Architect of great experience. He once lived here on earth. He worked in a carpenter shop in Nazareth. The hand that holds His hammer has the prints of nails through the palm, nails on which He hung on the Cross on Calvary for you. Is He your Architect? If so, your building will stand forever. Oh, man—woman—choose Jesus as your Architect. He was Paul's architect, and when the storms beat upon

him in Nero's dungeon, he was able to shout with joy: "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing."

He was the Architect of your Christian mother and mine; and, thank God, He is my Architect. Make Him yours now! Then you can sing triumphantly with Grant Colfax Tullar:

"A stranger to earth—but an heir to a throne,
He lived in Judea with those of His own;
With toil He grew wearied like many a one,
A humble Judean, 'The Carpenter's Son.'

"Whence hath He such wisdom, such power to display?
The dead raised to life, earth's night turned to day.
They never could fathom the deeds He had done,
For was He not only 'The Carpenter's Son'?

"This man of great sorrow, acquainted with grief,
Who bought earth's redemption, from sin gave relief—
He gave His life gladly ere scarce 'twas begun,
The offspring of David, 'The Carpenter's Son.'

"I'm sure that the mansion He's gone to prepare
Over yonder for me will be wondrously fair,
With nothing that's slighted, all perfectly done,
For is not the builder 'The Carpenter's Son'?

II

THE TRAGEDY OF A CHARACTER WITHOUT IDEALS:

Christ's Story of the Unfruitful Fig Tree and of the Empty House

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. And he said unto the vinedresser, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground? And he answering saith unto him, Lord let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it: and if it bear fruit thenceforth, well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down."—Luke 13: 6-9.

"The unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not. Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."—Matthew 12: 43-46.

IT seems to me that these two stories go well together. They both very picturesquely and graphically portray a personality that is without high ideals or purpose, a character that is only negative, without color or pep. In one story it is a tree that simply cumbers the ground and yields no fruit. In the other it is an empty house with no happy, vigorous life possessing it, a prey

to every wandering spirit of evil. In both cases there is nothing of that heroic spirit of adventure to which Jesus calls us in His appeal to follow Him.

Hermann Hagedorn sings, I think, the greatest song yet sung by an American poet in recognition of the lofty ideals which in an unusual measure animated our American youth who gave their lives on a foreign field in the great World War. He hails them as *Warriors of the Dream:*

"They pushed their glowing joys aside,
They laid their shining hopes away;
They hearkened, pale and starry-eyed,
And closed the books and dropped the play.
They said, 'There is a greater thing
Than fame or golden harvesting.
Out of the storm there came a cry
And we will answer, though we die!'

"They answered from the seething plain,
They answered from the reeling height,
To the last reaching-forth, in pain,
They sent their answer down the night:
'Though hope allure and love enthrall,
And precious youth and glory seem,
Sweeter than all, greater than all,
Is to give all to a dream!'

"They will not come again to play
The old games through the summer day,
Or seek the cool woods or the brooks,
Or open now the dusty books.
Yet, where in crowds, with restless feet,
The getters and the spenders meet,
There is, at times, a strange deep sound
Not from the sky, not from the ground,
And voices such as music hath
That shakes the heart and chokes the breath:
'Though hope allure and love enthrall,
And precious youth and glory seem,
Sweeter than all, greater than all,
Is to give all to a dream!'

"On its old orbit swings this earth;
Day comes, night comes; the seasons pass;
And holy memories, amid mirth,
Are but as shadows on a glass.
Men may forget and time erase
Of name and deed the last faint trace;
But in still hours, amid their joys,
Unborn, undreamed of, girls and boys
Shall of a sudden be aware
Of something not of earth or air,
A burning brow, a glowing eye,
A flame, a presence and a cry:
'Though hope allure and love enthrall,
And precious youth and glory seem,
Sweeter than all, greater than all,
Is to give all to a dream!'"

Jesus Christ calls every one of us to follow the most glorious dream of sacrifice and heroic endeavor and achievement that ever inspired the mind of man. When I ask you to give yourself heart and soul to follow Jesus Christ, I am not inviting you to enter on any commonplace journey. Rather I am offering you the privilege of entering on a career of romance and an experience of exciting interest. Paul, the dauntless hero of the Early Church, could never say enough to express his exultation in finding the Christian life more splendid than he had expected or could paint in human language. He was always coining new words to describe the glorious inspiration and enjoyment in his Christian life, despite all the things he endured for his Lord, often speaking about "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

Young man, young woman, dreaming of romantic adventure! You may find it in a real Christian

life as nowhere else. The appeal which won David Livingstone to Africa and his immortality was that daring offer of Robert Moffat: "I will take you where you will see the smoke of a thousand villages in none of which is the Gospel of Christ known." But do not imagine that it is only in a missionary life like Livingstone's that there is romance for a Christian. There is no walk of life anywhere in any land where the Christian cannot find romantic adventure as the servant and partner of Jesus. Think of good Doctor McClure in *Beside the Bonny Brier Bush.* Think of the good Bishop who brought back to God the soul of Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables.* John Wanamaker did not find his great Sunday school less interesting than his mercantile career. Heinz, the pickleman, found his religious work more tasty and snappy than the "57 varieties" by which he earned his fortune. No, my friend, you may be sure that in business life, in the life on the farm, or in a professional career, your earnest, vital, Christian life will find glorious adventure everywhere.

These stories of Jesus make it very clear that it is not in a life simply negative, taking no chances of being tested by positive, aggressive endeavor, that great manhood and noble womanhood can be built up. "Safety first" is all right in handling high-powered machinery and dangerous explosives or in dodging automobiles; but is

not the motto by which great human personality can be made.

That dean of American poets, Edwin Markham, who occupies in America, today, something of the same relation to Christian faith that Robert Browning did in England during the later years of his life, writes a strong poem in *The Homiletic Review* entitled *I Must Test His Spirit:*

"When in the dim beginning of the years,
God mixed in man the raptures and the tears,
And scattered through his brain the starry stuff,
He said, 'Behold! Yet this is not enough,
For I must test his spirit to make sure
That he can dare the vision and endure.

"'I will withdraw my face,
Veil me in shadow for a certain space,
And leave behind only a broken clue
A crevice where the glory glimmers through,
Some whisper from the sky,
Some footprints in the road to track me by.

"'I will leave man to make the fateful guess,
Will leave him torn between the no and yes,
Leave him unresting till he rests in me,
Drawn upward by the choice that makes him free—
Leave him in tragic loneliness to choose,
With all in life to win or all to lose.'"

Yes! it is the virile, positive life that develops character and personality, that does honor to God, and is fruitful in service to our fellows. Some one else sings:

"The test of a man is the fight that he makes,
The grit that he daily shows;
The way that he stands on his feet and takes
Fate's numerous bumps and blows.
A coward can smile when there's naught to fear,
When nothing his progress bars,

But it takes a man to stand up and cheer
While some other fellow stars.
It isn't the victory, after all,
But the fight that a brother makes;
The man who, driven against the wall,
Stands up erect and takes
The blows of fate with his head held high,
Bleeding and bruised and pale,
Is the man who'll win in the by and by,
For he isn't afraid to fail.
It's the bumps you get and the jolts you get,
And the shocks that your courage stands,
The hour of sorrow and vain regret,
The prize that escapes your hands,
That test your mettle and prove your worth;
It isn't the blows you'll deal,
But the blows that you take on the good old earth
That shows if your stuff is real."

Our stories bring out that good resolutions and strong wills, able to restrain a man from outward sin, are not enough to make us pleasing to God or Christ.

What a terrific, tragic message is conveyed in this colorful story of the fate of the man who has been possessed by an unclean, foul spirit. Through some uprising of conscience, some time of spiritual movement in the community, some occasion when revival flame quickened dead souls into attention, a time when a man like John the Baptist had thundered forth the message of repentance from sin, the man had been aroused and awakened to the foul, unclean nest of his soul, and by stern will he drove that dominating unclean spirit from his heart and life; but, alas, he puts no other tenant of aggressive goodness into his soul to take its place. He is like an empty house. He is no longer foully unclean; but he is empty.

He is not a bad man; but he is not definitely, purposefully a good man. Do not some of you see in these lines a mirror of your own condition?

But let us go on and note the tragedy that awaited this man. After a while, the unclean spirit comes back to the house from which he had been driven. If he had found a glad, brave, Christian life going on in that man's soul; if he had found prayer there, and earnest purpose to obey God, to follow Christ, to help his fellow-men, that foul spirit would have gone away discouraged; but, instead, he finds the place empty. That encourages the unclean spirit. But he remembers that by himself he was not able to hold this man's soul against an uprising of an awakened conscience, and he reflects. There comes to his evil mind the memory of a gang of evil spirits more vile and devilish than himself, and he hurries to them and says: "I have found a home for us all. It is an empty soul. I once lived there, but the man was too strong for me, and put me out in disgrace. But there are no new tenants yet, and if you seven will come with me, the eight of us will be strong enough to hold that man's soul against all that he can do." And so they came together with all their vile cunning and entered in and took possession; and Jesus says: "The last state of that man becometh worse than the first."

Are there not many men and women in our churches, who once belonged genuinely to Christ,

but who have been turned from the current of their Christian career, or become submerged and lodged in the mud of worldliness, and will be lost forever unless some great freshet of heavenly flood shall give them a new start, or some grappling hook of a Christlike seeker after souls shall clutch them where they are marooned and lift them up again into the heavenly current? I am told that in the rivers of the Lake States there lie, today, millions of dollars' worth of wealth in the form of pine logs which became waterlogged and sank during the drives of fifty years ago. These timbers when reclaimed from the river bottoms are virtually as good lumber as the day they were cut from the living tree. The lumber is slightly brittle, but its value is reduced very little. When the drives were on in the old days, the lumberjacks and rivermen worked feverishly to keep the logs together that they might take advantage of the freshet water which was stored by means of a series of log dams in all the larger rivers and their tributaries throughout the pineries of the Lake States. Logs were banked on the river during the winter and in the spring break-up they went tearing down to the mills far below on the main streams. During periods of extremely high water many of these logs became hidden from view in quiet backwaters and bayous. Becoming water-logged, they sank to the bottom, where they have been preserved throughout the long years.

This timber is the property of several lumber companies, many of which have gone out of existence years ago. Each log, however, bears the stamp of the company which cut it, and under the law it remains that company's property. An attempt to salvage these timbers would be, in the eyes of the law, theft, unless undertaken by the owners or their heirs, many of whom have died. It has been estimated that in the Menominee River alone there is more than 100,000,000 feet of lumber, worth in the aggregate today a vast sum of money. The Muskegon, Manistee and Au Sable rivers in Michigan, the Chippewa in Wisconsin, and many of the larger streams in Northern Minnesota have these golden hoards in their beds awaiting the inevitable day when the laws will permit the exploitation and utilization of their hidden treasures.

But there are greater treasures than these in the souls of men and women all about us offering glorious adventures to Christian men and women to salvage for eternity.

And I must not close without an earnest word to those who find themselves in the last state pictured by Jesus in this story of the repossession of the soul by reinforced spirits of evil.

I have for you a glorious message of hope. You may not be able,—indeed, I know that you are not able in your own unaided strength,—to cast out

these evil spirits which have intrenched themselves in the fortress of your soul. But Jesus is more than a match for your enemies. He who died on the cross for your sins; He who went down into the grave and came out again in glorious resurrection, is able to come into your soul and cast out every evil spirit and become Himself a glorious Master there. And if you will let Him come in, He will lead you forth on a romantic life of glad and blessed adventure. There is no other leader like Jesus, no other leader who can so fill every longing of your soul and supply all your need for time and eternity.

Brenton Thoburn Badley, a great missionary leader and a great soul-winner for Jesus Christ, writing from Calcutta surrounded by all the brilliant and picturesque coloring of Eastern life both in nature and in human forms, finds Jesus far more attractive and satisfying than anything else. He sings to Jesus:

"Thy face is my horizon;
When twilight falls midst mango topes
And bamboo clumps are wreathed in smoke,
O'er village nestled in the green of rice or wheat,
And far beyond show purple mountain slopes,
I hear the coming of Thy feet,—
Thou art my wide horizon.

"Thy voice is all my music;
When mainas hail the coming of the day,
And orioles flash music at still noon,
And when at dusk the koels' call my heart rejoice.
And cooing doves put forth their plaintive lay,
I hear the whispers of Thy voice,
Thou art my lasting music.

"Thy name is all my glory;
When men repeat the name of Ram,
And temple bells resound in cloistered halls,
And from the minarets muezzins voices raise,
Revealing still the presence of Islam,
I hear the angels sing Thy praise,—
Thou art my name of glory.

"Thy love is all my being;
Not Kashmir's flower-studded vale,
Nor Jheelum's banks nor Ganga's breast,
Nor palms nor pines, nor amaltas,
Nor garden, snowy with the jasmine pale,
Where bulbuls sing and sun-birds nest,
Mean aught to me without Thy love,—
Thou art my inmost heart, my all!"

I call upon you now to let Jesus come into your heart and become your all-in-all.

III

THE ROMANCE OF GOD'S FARM:

Christ's Story of the Sower

"And he spake to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured them: and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth; and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them: and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He that hath ears, let him hear."—Matthew 13 : 3-9.

THERE is romance about the humblest farm. It is the romance of God's open world, God's glorious Out-of-Doors. The romance of the sunrise upon a world rested and refreshed; the romance of the hopeful morning, the restful noontide; the romance of the sunset, the wistful twilight, the curtains of darkness, and the glorious mystery of the moon and the stars.

Then there is the romance of the changing seasons which no one knows so well as the farmer. It is the farmer boy or girl who knows where to look for the first spring flowers when the south wind blows softly. It is the farmer who knows that most delicious fragrance, the smell of newly-

plowed ground, while the robin-redbreast follows in his furrow for dislodged worms and bugs.

The farm is glorified with the romance of growth. The farmer sees the green halo coming on the willow and oak and poplar. He sees the grain springing up to cover the signs of his toil with plow and harrow and drill with the gracious promise of harvest.

The farm is full of the romance of birds and bees and wild life of every sort and kind. The farm is not only romantic in trees nurtured for their fruit, but glorious in pasture woods, where God's wild orchards of hawthorn and crab-apple and wild plum and dogwood tell of God's love for beauty and grace.

It is the farmer who knows the joy of reaping; of full barns and huge stacks and bursting granaries; of lowing herds; of cellars filled against winter's need. It is the farmer who has the romantic joy of knowing that his toil feeds the world. In imagination he can see his grain and fruit feeding the governor or the judge in their far-away homes. As he dreams by his open fire, he sees the train or the ship that will carry his harvest to fill the empty tables in other lands than his own, may even dream that wool from his sheep and butter and cheese from his dairy may clothe the naked and feed the hungry thousands of miles away on the other side of the globe.

The farm has always about it the romance of

adventure. Last year may have been despoiled by drouth or flood, but this is a new year, fresh from the hand of God, and may break all records for fruitfulness and blessing. So it is not without warrant that I have named my theme the romance of the farm.

But Jesus told this story to illustrate God's farm in our human hearts. Later, when the disciples had Jesus alone to themselves, they asked Him about it, and the Master said: "Hear then ye the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the wayside. And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth. And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

So you see that it is the soil of our minds and

hearts God is seeking to cultivate. This is what Paul meant when, writing his first letter to the Corinthians, he says, "Ye are God's husbandry." There is a marginal rendering in the revised edition of the New Testament which makes that sentence of Paul clearer yet, which makes him say: "Ye are God's tilled land."

What dignity it adds to our human nature when we realize that each one of us is a separate and individual farm of Almighty God! And we can never achieve the highest character and career that is possible for us unless we give God the right-of-way in the cultivation of the spiritual farm in us. For there is a difference between an earthly farm and a spiritual farm in this: that it is not the fault of the wayside ground for being hard, or the stony places for not having much earth, or the thorny places that the soil is not free of thorn roots. But with us it is different. We can by our own attitude mellow the wayside strip and create or clean up the rocky places and make or mar the thorny nooks. It is possible for us to thwart God's beneficent plan for our cultivation, or, on the other hand, aid in the fitting of our mental and moral or spiritual soil to bring forth flourishing crops to the glory of God and the blessing of mankind.

Thinking of this, no doubt, Robert Louis Stevenson says: "No man can truly say that he has

made a success of life unless he has written at the top of his life-journal, 'Enter God.'"

What marvelous romance there is about God's farming of the souls of men and women! God meets a man on the way to Damascus full of hate and bitterness and fairly revelling in the sorrow and ravage of his hands; and after He has plowed and harrowed that ravisher and murderer, there comes forth a new man—not Saul the persecutor, but Paul, the tender-hearted and loving saint.

God meets a young Englishman and calls him forth from a humble home, and though he has only modest ability, He so cultivates his mind and heart that he is able to bear fruit in blessing millions of humble, impoverished men and women in every part of the globe. William Booth stands forth at the head of his Salvation Army as one of the greatest soul-winners of the Christian era.

God lays His hand on a sodden tinker like John Bunyan, or a drunken lawyer like John G. Wooley, and cultivates their hearts and minds until the desert blossoms as the rose before their feet. God meets a prairie girl in Illinois, and takes possession of her pure heart and sturdy brain, and step by step cultivates her personality, until Frances Willard charms multitudes from their cups and quickens a nation's conscience and gives world-wide prohibition a mighty onward impulse toward a sober America and a cleaner world.

God meets a drinking, reckless, baseball player

like Billy Sunday, and runs the Gospel plow deep into his stony heart, and drives His saving harrow over that reckless youth, and a new Billy Sunday, fruitful in the conversion of tens of thousands of men and women, shines forth.

God's farming has all the charm and romance of virile life and growth. The great purpose in God's farming is to produce fruit, and over and over Christ lays the accent on *much* fruit.

Neither a nation nor a man or a woman receives God's approval unless attaining a vigorous life of goodness.

I am in hearty sympathy with the wave of thought and feeling sweeping over the world just now, seeking to outlaw war. But we must not forget that it must be a righteous peace. Peace may be as bad as war if it is not built up and maintained in a spirit of aggressive goodness. John Drinkwater, the English poet, was one of the first to see that what mankind needed to win out of the World War was something far greater than a victory of arms on the field of battle. His great poem, making an impassioned plea for nobler ideals, written before the war ended, still remains unanswered. He sings in soul-stirring earnestness:

"War is most dreadful;
And yet full well
May Peace be fouler than War's foulest hell,
Unless some strong new soul of life
Rise up to stay—
To stay, if need be, with the knife—
The slow, insidious dry-rot of decay,

Which no whit less than war doth Christ betray;
Rise up to charge all life with quickened zest
For things not only better, but the best.

"Peace that means laxing of the soul's upreach,
Peace that means but an ever-widening breach
'Twixt man and man—and so
'Twixt man and God;
Peace that means tolerance of obvious wrong,
Peace that means safety only for the strong,
Peace that means heedlessness of others' woes,
Peace that means chance new burdens to impose,
Peace that means wealth outsweated from the poor,
Peace that means God's perfidious coverture,
Peace that means palaces on pigstyes reared,
Peace that means gold with brave men's blood besmeared,
Peace that means virtue offered out for hire,
Peace that means honor trampled in the mire,
Peace that means ill division of life's good,
Peace that means ill adjustment of life's load,
Peace that means brimming bowls and ruined lives,
Peace that for sake of gain at shame connives,
Peace that maintains the standards of the past,
Peace that still leaves the Lord of all outcast,
That is no peace!
A mocking parody of peace,
It shall not last.

* * * *

"Peace without God as base and cornerstone,
Peace without Right concreted in its frame,
Peace without Truth up-pillaring its dome,
Peace without Justice buttressing its walls,
Peace without Grace as its fair furnishings,
Peace without Honor as its golden lamp,
Peace that is all unfortified with Love—
That is no peace!

"Get back to God and fundamental Right!
Build His new house with patience infinite:
Resolve Life's vast complexities to ways
More simple, and exalt the days!
Let all Life's warp and woof be interwove
With gold of noble thought and radiant love;
So—only so—shall Life's New Temple stand."

That is true of God's greater farm of the world, but it is just as true in God's farm in your soul and mine.

There is a peace of death that has no worthy life and bears no fruit for God or man.

A year or so ago in a Western city a murder was committed, and the man against whom the blame stood clearly was arraigned in court. The corpse seemed good evidence of a crime, and it looked like a certain conviction. The defense, however, made a strange demand. It was contended that before any man could be proven a murderer it would be necessary to prove that the victim had ever lived. The court sought for evidence. None could be found, and the accused man was set free, because there was no proof that Sam Sperling had ever lived. Dr. M. S. Rice of Detroit, commenting on this strange event, says: "That bit of news troubled me when I read it, and I carried the item in my pocket and have filed it for keeping. I wondered if it would be murder if some one should stop me in my all too small way in this world. I would hate to die out of such an exacting day as is this, and have it said there is absolutely no proof available that I had ever lived."

Mere refraining from outbreaking sin is not enough. It is not enough that no poisonous weeds of evil-doing grow on God's farm in your soul; there must be fruit unto the serving and blessing of your fellows about you.

If God has the right of way to run our farms as He wills, we shall not only be happy, but our homes and our neighbors as well will have happiness in

the beautiful and delicious fruits God will grow in the fragrant garden of our cultivated hearts.

Do you remember that wild man of Gadara whom Jesus tamed, and when he in gratitude wanted to go with Jesus, the Master sent him home instead? Dr. J. H. Jowett, one of the sweetest Gospel preachers of our time, now transplanted into the Heavenly Gardens, comments on that man of Gadara in a most helpful way:

"Just go back home! That was the Master's counsel. I thought He might have made much larger use of a man who had been so sensationally healed. I thought He might have given him a more imposing stage. He might have sent him abroad on some pilgrimage of witness, commanding him to go north, south, east and west, to exhibit himself as one of the marvelous trophies of the Nazarene. What a phenomenal advertisement it would have been! What curiosity he would have kindled! In every village how folk would have left their fields to gaze upon him, and crowds would have gathered around him in the towns! But no. The Master told him to go quietly home. But what a home-going! He went back a new man, renewed in Christ Jesus, and his commission was to move about in commonplace ways, a miracle of the Lord in ordinary spheres. That is it! He was to be a miracle at home."

And is it not true some of you will read his further comment with blushing face and accusing conscience? Dr. Jowett goes on to say:

"And this is the witness which today is demanded more than anything else. It is not spectacular beacons that we need; it is just ordinary street lamps. We want the transfigured presence in the common lot. We need lamps of the Lord to light up inconspicuous spheres and bring something of heavenly radiance into the workshop and the home. And especially we want the witness of men and women who have been renewed by Jesus, and who take an absolutely new spirit into places where hitherto they have been a burden or a nuisance. Think of a man going back to his old home with

a sweetened temper! He has been sour, gruff, irritable, explosive, and now Jesus Christ has transformed him. What a home-going!

"The call to multitudes of such people is not to carry their sweetened life to the Fiji Islands or to India, but to their home and their workshop and their office, where their very presence has robbed the day of its sunshine and silenced all the songbirds in their neighbors' hearts. There need be no fuss about their witness; there is no necessity for loud talking. Everybody knows the difference between a vinegar cask and a vine. The vine requires no label, especially when the grapes are rich and ripe; we can take and eat them. A fine royal mood in place of a bitter mood, and the transfiguration of the work of Jesus! It would be a miracle in the home.

"Or think of the pessimist going back home shining with radiant hope. The funereal garb of melancholy has been changed for the bright wedding garment of Christian confidence. Or think of some fretful, complaining spirit turning up one day clothed in the garment of praise. What an angel in the house! All these may seem to be very commonplace ministries as compared with the romance of going to Greenland's icy mountains or India's coral strand, but this is the sort of service which is going to transform the world. Return to thy house! Go and make a heaven of home, and God's kingdom will come with mighty power and grace."

If we give God the right of way to do heaven's best with our farm, people far away will be blessed by our fruits.

James Maxon Yard, a missionary in China, who came home to America to stir the home church of Methodism in that great era of sacrifice and devotion, called in Methodist circles "The Centenary," tells in a little poem entitled *Rain From America Rains on Us* what his Chinese people said to him when he went back to his mission field in far-away West China:

"I was just back from the Centenary.
They met me at the gateway with fire-crackers and a red banner.
It was covered all over with marks of a Chinese brush pen;
Every line shone with the glimmer of gold—beautiful.

It was a glorious welcome back by friends and neighbors.
The golden words on the banner said:
'The rain from America rains on us.'
Hospitals for the sick and lame and blind;
Schools for boys and girls, kindergartens for the kiddies;
Libraries and movies; places for worship,
And places for play
'Rain from America rains on us.'"

And his own happy heart responded:

"Dry as a desert it sometimes seems,
But the seeds of a thousand harvests lie buried here.
Let the rain flood down
And the miracle called life—
The Life more abundant—
Shall bloom before our eyes."

My friend, how about your farm? Has God the free right of way there? If not, bid Him enter now. Some one, commenting on that great sentence of Jesus Christ, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," aptly says that Jesus never stands knocking at the door of a sinner's heart alone. Satan stands there also, peering over the Saviour's shoulder, leaning forward, seeking to tempt the wavering soul to reject the blessed Master's tender invitation. Satan was a liar from the beginning. Do not listen to him. Turn to the Saviour in tender prayer, and the lying deceiver will flee. Nothing will put the devil to flight like real prayer.

A Pennsylvania state trooper tells how he arrested a merchant suspected of burning his store to get the insurance money. The business man was indignant. "See here, young man," he told the trooper, "I want you to understand that I stand high in this community; I am a Christian and a

praying-man." Promptly the trooper answered, "I am a praying man myself; I used to be with Billy Sunday. Let's get down on our knees and pray about this." And that youthful officer prayed so earnestly and powerfully that the merchant, when it came his turn to pray, acknowledged before the Lord in broken sobs his absolute guilt. The devil cannot stand honest prayer to God.

Yield now your mind and heart and all your ransomed powers to be God's farm forever. Yield to Christ and you will realize with Henry Burton that the best of all gifts is Jesus Himself:

"I do not ask Thee, Lord, for outward sign,
For portents in the earth or flaming sky;
It is enough to know that Thou art mine,
And not far off, but intimately nigh.

"No burning bush I need to speak Thy name;
Or call me forward to the newer task;
Give me a burning heart, with love aflame,
Which sees Thee everywhere, is all I ask.

"No pillar-cloud I seek to mark my way
Through all the windings of the trackless years;
Thou art my Guide, by night as well as day,
To choose my path, and hush my foolish fears.

"I do not look for fiery cloven tongues,
To tell for me the pentecostal hour;
The Father's promise for all time belongs
To him who seeks the Spirit's quickening power.

"I do not ask for voices from the sky;
The thunder-peal I might not understand;
But let me hear Thy whisper, 'It is I!
Fear not the darkness, child, but take My hand!'

"What can I ask but Thine own Self, dear Lord?
Omniscience and omnipotence are Thine.
Let but my will with Thy sweet will accord,
And all Thou hast and all Thou art is mine!"

IV

THE YEAST OF CHRISTIAN WOMANHOOD IN MODERN LIFE

Christ's Story of the Leaven that a Woman Hid in Three Measures of Meal

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened."—Matthew 13 : 33.

THIS is peculiarly the woman's story among the parables of Jesus. True, there are other woman's parables. There is the story of the ten virgins—five wise and five foolish—but the bridegroom is a dominant figure there. Then there is the story of the woman who lost one of her ten pieces of silver and went searching and sweeping until she found it and then went rejoicing to her neighbors. But a man can lose money as well as a woman, even if he cannot find it as well. But here in this story of the leaven we have woman as the dominant figure.

It is a home-picture staged in the kitchen where, in Christ's day at least, woman reigned supreme.

Many a time in His happy boyhood at Nazareth, as He played about the floor of the cottage, and later when he worked for many years in the

carpenter shop of Joseph, Jesus had seen His sweet mother Mary take out from the flour-bin the three measures of meal which was about what was needed in an average-sized family such as Mary presided over, and watched with a boy's interested eye as she put the yeast or the leaven into the meal and kneaded it, and worked with it, until the dough was ready to set away in a warm, safe place to wait while the leaven went on silently working through the night until it permeated every atom of the meal and brought it all into a harmonious whole ready for baking into the appetizing, wholesome bread that was to feed and nourish her growing family.

How many times as a boy out in the then new pioneer Oregon country when there was not a public bakery within hundreds of miles, only little log cabin homes hewed out of the forest, have I watched my own mother Mary, as sweet, and pure, and wholesome as the mother of Jesus, doing the same thing, and watched with all my boyish, romantic, curious wonder as the strange life in the yeast lifted the dough until it grew larger before my eyes and showed strange bubbles in its bursting sides as the loaves swelled into fulness ready for the baking. The work of the yeast in every week's baking in the old tin reflector before the open fire, or in the great round skillet oven on the broad hearth with its glowing heaps of oak coals beneath between its three legs or piled on its lid

above it, was as great a miracle to me as the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand with the little peddler lad's loaves and fishes. It was the same miracle of mysterious, invisible life working marvelous transformations.

Now Jesus Himself is the leaven, the yeast that is to dominate and transform the life of the world, to master all humanity and bring it into one great harmonious whole. Man has never yet, anywhere, at any time in any climate of earth, been able to rise by himself. It has always required the leaven of Christianity to permeate his being and quicken him into upward look and effort. Man left to his own devices has always degenerated, gone down and not up, grown worse and not better. Man needs the divine yeast from heaven which Jesus brought to the world. We need, in order to become good men and women, that this heavenly yeast from God which Jesus brought shall enter into our lives and dominate and control our entire personality. You cannot have a perfect loaf of bread unless the yeast brings every atom of the meal or flour into cooperation and into submission to the yeast. The yeast is life,—virile, active, working life. We are the loaf. The yeast of God in Christ must control our thinking. "As a man thinketh," says a wise man of old, "so is he." Our thoughts, our planning, the pictures painted in our imaginations, must be clean and pure and wholesome and Christian.

Christ must dominate our hearts as well as our heads. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The fountain must not only be cleansed, but must be the source—the spontaneous source—of pure, sweet water of life that flows forth in wholesome speech and conversation.

This divine yeast must permeate our consciences and make the "Thou shalt" and the "Thou shalt not" in the court room of our own souls Christian. Then the divine leaven will control our deeds and work forth in our habits and rise into a wholesome, nourishing loaf of character to feed and bless the world.

But I do not wish to go astray from the thought with which I began: that this is peculiarly the women's parable. It is a woman story.

Christ was a manly man whom the greatest men who have ever lived have respected and honored and revered. But this is also true, that in a more complete sense than any other man in all human history, Jesus is a woman's man. Christ's relation to womanhood is one of the most beautiful things in all history and in all literature. This Man who had no wife, no sweetheart, no sister, whose whole manhood stands out pure and stainless in thought as in deed, is the matchless hero of womanhood around the world through all time.

The attitude of Jesus toward womanhood is not only beautiful and ideal, but unique among the great men of history. He was born into a world

where woman was accustomed to submission, to take a back seat and hide in obscurity, and He threw open the gates to every noble avenue of career for her expression of her noblest self in blessing the world.

Jesus learned to respect and revere womanhood in the arms of His sweet mother, Mary, and He welcomed and blessed every woman He touched throughout His life.

Good women like Martha and Mary of Bethany; like Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; and Salome, the mother of James and John, adored Him; and poor unfortunate women like Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils, followed Him to the Cross and beyond, as the day-star of their lives. Poor, sinful women of the streets, like the woman who came unbidden to Simon's dinner and broke her precious vase of ointment to perfume Christ's head, who wetted His feet with her tears and wiped them with her flowing hair, and that other woman brought to Jesus in the Temple on the way to be stoned to death, went out from His presence to love and worship Him evermore as the God who had lifted them into life and hope.

And we must never allow it to be overlooked that Christian civilization and all the glorious uplifting of humanity through the Christian leaven that has transformed the world, has been largely the work of Christian womanhood. I know all the big

names in the Acts of the Apostles are men's names —Paul and Peter and John and James and so on— but behind them was a multitude of unnamed women.

I quite agree with Nixon Waterman when he sings:

"I calculate I've been around about as much as anybody,
Observin' all the ways of folks, an' after purty careful study,
It's my conclusion that the men secure 'bout all the credit due 'em,
While women as a rule don't get the praise that should be comin' to 'em.

"Jest take the leaders o' the world—they'll tell you in some way or other
The strength that made 'em win their fame was borrowed from a wife or mother.
An' if the truth is ever known—the hull truth—how they got so noted—
Jest lots of statues made fer men will be rebuilt an' petticoated.

"I don't maintain all women folks are perfect, an' I never said it,
Yet I believe they're doin' good for which the men are gettin' credit.
An' when I see a monument with some man's figure up above it,
I think that jest as like as not a woman's at the bottom of it."

Let us never forget that the whole history of Christian civilization is in a very large degree epitomized in this parable of the leaven. It is very largely true that Christian womanhood took the Christ yeast and hid it in the meal of humanity, and that she deserves credit for an immense proportion of the good it has accomplished. As the leaven has permeated the dough of human life, cer-

tain great evils have been thrown off and destroyed, and Christian women have figured largely in all such reform. Take the overthrow of slavery. Men's names, mostly, are inscribed on the roll of fame; but what multitudes of Christian women stood behind them in the shadows with flaming hearts lifted to God and inspired their men for their work.

On one occasion Wendell Phillips was due to speak for human freedom in Boston at a time of great bitterness, when his life had been threatened, and he was going out to face a mob that would make most men cower. He went into the bedroom of his home to say good-by to Mary Phillips, his wife, who was an invalid, and she hid her fears back in her heart, and reaching out her thin white hands she took his big hand in her delicate fingers and lifted it to her lips and said, "Wendell, don't shilly-shally." Women like that bred and inspired the heroes of that age.

Among the great leaders of that epoch that tried strong men's souls was Henry Ward Beecher. But he, himself, would have been first to say that he did not do one tithe as much to destroy African slavery as did his sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, by her powerful novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* that captured the imagination of multiplied thousands of men and women hitherto indifferent, and roused the country as sermons and lectures and political campaigns had never been able to do.

And then came the rising swell of the yeast of Christian thought and feeling against the indescribable evils of the open liquor saloon. Men fought, too; the world will never forget men like John B. Gough and Neal Dow and John G. Wooley, John P. St. John and Howard Russell, and Purly Baker who has just gone to be with God; but the fairest, sweetest name in all that list of heroes is Frances Willard, who was born out of the woman's crusade and whose career was a benediction from heaven. The charm of her eloquence, matched by the purity of her soul and given irresistible power by the burning passion of her Christlike enthusiasm for humanity, lifted the whole campaign into a higher realm of discussion and prepared the way for the united team work of the Christian churches in the Anti-saloon League, which brought victory to the temperance hosts in the constitutional prohibition of the foul liquor traffic.

We must remember in recounting the victories of the Christian Church in the world, that womanhood deserves the major credit, for she has been in the majority and has furnished far more than one-half of all the fighting soldiers of Jesus Christ. Far more than one-half of all the membership of the Christian Churches has always been and is today furnished by women. The Methodist Episcopal Church, at its last General Conference held in Springfield, Massachusetts, reports that among

its many millions of members sixty-two out of every hundred are women, and that percentage would no doubt run very closely through all the Churches, and the majority of women grows in importance when we consider that an army is powerful only in proportion to the number of active soldiers ready to be thrown on the firing line. There the women far surpass the men. No man who has been pastor of large churches through many years but knows that when the call to colors is sounded for prayer-meeting night, and in great evangelistic campaigns, a pastor counts himself happy indeed if he can marshal on the firing line half as many men as he has women.

And on Mothers' Day we do not fail to record with thanksgiving the service of multitudes of noble Christian women often held in reserve by the duties connected with home keeping and childhood's care.

Next to the name of God comes that of mother, to most if not all of us. When

"God thought to give the sweetest thing
In His almighty power
*To earth; * * **
** * * * * * * * * **
He moved the gates of heaven apart
And gave to earth—a mother."

No other class of people in this world has done so much to spread the yeast of the Christian faith and hope and life in the heart of humanity as Christian mothers. In memory of my own mother,

who still lives on earth in joyous fellowship with Christ, and who carries her eighty-six years of faithful service as a crown of imperishable glory, I salute in sincerest honor and reverence every Christian mother in all the world.

There is no man eloquent enough to tell adequately of the beauty, the courage, the fidelity, the glory of holy motherhood. If I were asked to put a wreath of glory upon the brow of the one personage of the Bible roll of heroes whom, aside from Jesus Christ, I count most worthy, on what brow do you think I would place it? Not Abraham or Moses or David or Joshua. Not Elijah or Elisha or Isaiah or Daniel. Not Paul or Peter or John—none of these, greatly as I admire and revere them. But I would go straight to that particular throne in heaven where today sits Rizpah, dear old faithful Rizpah, who, when her sons were taken prisoners in battle and crucified, and were left to waste away on their crosses, wrapped herself in her shawl of sackcloth upon the rocks near them and remained on guard for one hundred and eighty days and nights. From May until October she kept the vultures from their dead bodies by day, and with blazing torch kept the hyenas and the lions from them by night, until at last her story reached the ears of David and roused his poetic soul to a worthy response, and the wasted bodies of her dead were taken down and buried in honor and she could rest. On Rizpah's brow in the holy

name of motherhood everywhere would I place the noblest crown for human heroism.

Great responsibility rests on the shoulders of Christian womanhood today. God never gives great blessing or privilege to any one without a corresponding duty.

The last half-century has been like a miracle in its opening of the gates of opportunity to women. When I joined the campaign to fight for woman suffrage, there was then not a country on earth where a woman could vote as to the government that should rule over her. Today woman suffrage is practically universal. Even the Turk has given suffrage to his women. There was not in those earlier days a single great university open on equal terms to boys and girls. Now it is all changed. In those days only three or four means of earning a livelihood were open for women, and they were very poorly paid; but all that is passing away, and equal wages for equal work will soon be the rule everywhere.

What is womanhood going to do with the sharp tools of life? Thoughtful, earnest men today are hoping and praying that Christian women bring into the meal of our political and civil life the Christ leaven, the yeast from God, and transform it into a new and wholesome world—make the world safe for humanity.

I once spoke in Tremont Temple in Boston, many years ago, on the same platform with Fred-

erick Douglass, in a great woman-suffrage meeting, and I remember Douglass said, "You say we must not bring women into the dirty pool of politics. Who made the pool dirty? There have been no women playing in it."

The women of America have it in their power to transform politics. If they will put the virile yeast of Christian faith and righteous purpose into the dough of our time, they can leaven the whole lump. They can make it impossible for the foul liquor saloon ever to come back. They can drive the prize-fight off the platform forever, and they can bring to the official life of the nation a new and holy view of public office and service that will make marvelously for the righteousness and purity of modern life.

In the name of all Christ has meant to womanhood through all the centuries for nearly two thousand years, I call on every woman to be a sincere Christian. And I cannot but feel that peculiarly in these days Christ in a new earnestness is standing knocking at the door of every woman's heart where He had not already been made welcome, and is saying tenderly, pleadingly, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." And if you will open the door and welcome Him, He will come in and make your personality and life a great and glorious benediction from heaven on all the life of your time.

V

THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls; and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."—MATTHEW 13: 44-46.

THE scenes portrayed in these stories are very suggestive to the imagination. It was long ago, before the days of trust companies or banks or building and loan associations, when men and women hid their gold and silver and precious treasures in the earth for safe keeping. So, as the years and the centuries passed, many treasures were lost. A man or a woman dies suddenly, without disclosing the hiding-place, and the treasures go back again to be a part of the unowned treasures of mother earth which belong to whoever finds them.

Let us try to make the old story live again before our minds and yield its divine lesson. There was a rich farmer in the fertile Jordan valley beyond the Jordan river from Jerusalem, the Mecca of Jewish worship and power, who had

many fields and was rich in flocks and herds. Not far away from the lordly home of gracious old Barzillai, the friend of David, there lived a poor man, by the name of John Seeker, in a very humble little cottage. Seeker was poor in everything except his house full of children. He had the Psalmist's blessing of a " quiver full " of children. But it was very hard to find enough to feed them all. However, John Seeker was a hard worker and was often employed on the wide-reaching farm of Barzillai.

So it happened that one morning he was sent to plow up a field that had been lying out for pasture for a long time. It was a stony, rough field, and when Barzillai sent John Seeker out there to plow, he laughed and said, " John, I am going to give you a hard job today. I want you to take the heaviest yoke of oxen on the place and go over to that stony pasture stretching up beyond the creek and begin plowing it up. My grandfather used to live over there, and all that pasture was cultivated; but when my father came over here and built the new house where I live, the buildings were all moved away, and that field was turned into pasture and has not been plowed for nearly a hundred years. It has had a long rest and ought to bring a good crop."

So John Seeker took his oxen and plow and went to work at the old field. The strip where he began to plow was so rough and rocky that constant at-

tention to the plow was required lest it break on a big stone. So John Seeker's eyes were continually glued to the plow and the soil he was turning up to the sunlight for the first time in nearly a century. Sometimes the point of the plow would strike a stone too large to overturn, and he would cry "Whoa!" to the oxen, lift the plow over, and start in anew on the other side.

Suddenly the point of the plow went under a good sized stone, and John Seeker was just puckering his lips for "Whoa!" when the stone upheaved and the quick eye of the plowman caught a glimpse of a treasure-box beneath, a box full of gold and silver and precious jewels. Then he *did* shout "Whoa!" with a vengeance. He fell on his knees by the open treasure-box and dug out the clods and loosened dirt that had fallen in and feasted his eyes on more money and jewels than he had ever seen before in all his life.

Now John Seeker thought quickly. He knew that according to the law these hidden treasures belonged to the man who owned the field. So he heaved the big, stone cover back into place and covered it over carefully. It was about time to stop for dinner, so he drove his oxen in to water and feed and went at once to see Barzillai. When he met Barzillai he said, "What will you take for that old field where I am plowing?"

"Why, John, what do you want with that field?"

"Well, it is very low where I live and there is

a good, high building place and a good spring of water in that old field across the creek, and it would give more room for my children to work at home."

"Well, Seeker," said Barzillai, "you are a hard worker and I like to have you near where I can have your help. If you can raise that much, I will sell you that field for five hundred shillings."

It was a big sum to poor John Seeker, but he just had to have that field, for he had seen enough in that treasure box to make him rich for life. So John said, "Barzillai, I hope I can raise it. I am going to try. Let me off for a day or so and I will see what I can do."

"All right, John. Good luck to you," laughed good-natured Barzillai as John Seeker hurried away. Into the village he went. He sold his home, his cow, and his donkey. John and his wife then dug up what little savings they had hidden away. They stripped themselves of everything they had in the world, until at last he had the five hundred shillings and went back and bought the old field with its hidden treasure.

That is the story Jesus gave us. Let Ruth Wooley Laws guide us to His meaning.

"Treasure there was, hid away in a field,
In a stony field and rough;
An unknown hand had buried there,
And the rocks concealed the stuff.
A man came walking through the field,
On other errands bent—
From the sun, a beam; from the earth, a gleam;

He knelt, he dug, content.
Through the streets of a neighboring town he went,
Crying his goods for sale,
And when eventide came softly down,
He had sold his all—the field was his,
And the treasure he had found.

"He lifted the treasure from the earth,
Free from the dirt and the sand;
He drew the gold and the jewels out,
And held them in his hand.
He said to himself as he stood in the light,
And watched the wondrous glow:
'Who would have dreamed, from this stony field
To have taken a treasure so?'
The field was stony, the dirt was grim,
But rare were the jewels held therein.

"Treasure there was, hid away in a heart,
In a stony heart and rough,
An unseen hand had buried there,
And sin concealed the stuff.
Men went by and touched the sleeve
Of the outer garments worn,
Or stumbled over the rocks within
And passed on bruised and torn.
The years went on and no one knelt,
And no one dug the scum,
And the rocks still waited a lifting hand,
And the field was still unowned.
Until one day came a heavenly beam,
Then from that heart a feeble gleam,
And the Master paid the blood-bought price,
And that heart was all his own.

"He lifted the treasure from the earth,
From flesh and dust and clod,
And back to the treasure house he took
The jewel home to God.
And he said to himself, as he stood in the light
That streamed from the throne above,
'I knew that in that stony ground
There was treasure to be found.'
Within was light—without was night,
And sin was all around;
But up above—all-seeing love
And mercy doth abound!"

And such glorious treasures are waiting to be

dug out of their hiding place in every land on earth today.

My dear friend, Dr. William L. Stidger, himself a great treasure-hunter for Christ, tells this story of his travels in the Philippines:

"In the Philippines the romance of a church is followed always by the Christian romance of individuals; romances of the moral regeneration of men which, in the hands of a more skilled writer, would make material for a George Eliot's Tito in *Romola,* or a Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables.*

"There was Thomas Altemara. What a spiritual-looking young Filipino he is! It had lines—that face—that thrilled me, as so many of these brown people do have.

"Thomas comes of that small race they call the Ibinags. They live up north on the main Island of Luzon. There are only about one hundred thousand of them left. Other tribes and races are crowding them out of the little valley they have occupied for centuries.

"Altemara came to Dr. Huddleston as a cook. When he came into this missionary's home he asked but one thing.

"Dr. Huddleston told me this story one morning, during the Filipino Conference. A boy had just testified in a few thrilling, brief words. Then Dr. Huddleston arose.

"'Ten years ago that boy, who has just testified, came to my home as a cook. He said to me that morning, "I have just one request to make." 'What is that?' I asked him.

"'"That I do not want to have 'Protestanti' preached to me. I am a Catholic, and I know what I want. I have a Bible of my own, and I know what to do. I do not want you to interfere with my religion."

"'All right,' I said to him. 'All we want now is a cook. We'll let the rest take care of itself.'

"'I made just one provision, as Thomas will remember,' and the big man smiled back at his "boy in Christ" across the church. It was a beautiful friendship; as beautiful in a way as that between a father and a son.

"'That provision was that he should kneel with us in our family worship each morning. That would not interfere with his religion. He agreed. We lived over the church, and each Sunday Thomas could hear the children singing. I used to see him stand still to listen.'

"There was an electric atmosphere in the church as he continued this remarkable human-interest story, with the subject of it sitting back in the rear seat, embarrassed to confusion, modest fellow that he was.

"'A year and a half later,' continued the missionary to that tense, waiting crowd in the Conference, 'Thomas came to me and said, "I want to ask your forgiveness for what I said when I first came to be your cook. I am ashamed. I want you to baptize me into your church and your religion, for I have watched your lives and I want that kind of a church." Then he said, "And I want one of those papers!"

"'I said, "One of what papers, my boy?"

"'He replied, "One of those papers so I can preach."

"'I found that what he wanted was an exhorter's license, so I gave it to the boy. He has been preaching ever since. He has won thousands to Christ.

"'But the test came a year ago. He was offered an opportunity to go to America to school.'

"Then the big man, with tear-red eyes, turned to that crowd of young Filipinos and said, 'A thing that every boy here would give his right arm to do is to go to America.' They smiled back an affirmative. He continued: 'But Thomas came to me and said, "I shall not go!"

"'Why?' I asked him, surprised.

"'"Because," said he, "I am the only man in my race of a hundred thousand Ibinags who has been called to preach. If I go to America, I may forget my people. I may get proud, as I have seen many of my kind do. I will stay with them. Five years with them may do much. God tells me to do this. I must stay with my people."

"'Then that boy forgot that he was talking with me. He forgot my presence even, and lifted his head as if in prayer and said, "Yes, dear, dear God, I must stay with my people. They need me so."

"'And is it any wonder that that boy who just testified in this meeting is literally winning souls by the hundreds among his people?' asked the big missionary.

"That was the end of the meeting, but not the end of that lad's story in my heart, for there is in that lad the making of another Livingstone to the Filipinos."

Then Jesus tells this other story of the pearl of great price to bring the message of salvation still more individually and personally to our minds.

Pearls are the last word in the East to tell the most precious thing that can be said about a treasure.

I was reading only the other day a story carried

by the Associated Press from Delhi, India. The story told how the Viceroy had invested his Highness, the Nawab of Bahawalpur, with ruling powers. The Nawab is only nineteen years old, but for the occasion he wore the famous pearls of Bahawalpur, which are said to be worth two hundred million dollars. But the pearl of great price which Jesus speaks of in this story is worth infinitely more than the jewels of this Indian Nawab. The pearl which Jesus describes is the salvation of the soul—the forgiveness of our sins, the cleansing of the conscience, the peace of mind and heart that no one can bestow save Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Many years ago, at a crowded meeting in one of the largest churches in New York City the Superintendent of a famous Rescue Mission, a tall, fine-looking man, was asked to speak. He told of the growth of the Mission and of the work it tried to do, and then he closed with these words:

"I was asked today as I came into this church, 'Have you ever seen a bad man become a good man?' Yes, my friends, I have. Sixteen years ago a man was leaning against a beer barrel in a saloon in New York. His coat was in tatters. His shoes would hardly hold together. He had not a cent in his pocket or a friend in the world. He had broken his mother's heart, he had deserted his wife. No door was open to him—not even that of the hospital, for he was not sick; nor that of the morgue, for he was not dead. Some one in the saloon said to him: 'You'd better go up to Forty-third street. There's a mission up there that you might work for a night's lodging!' The man went, and reeled into the mission half drunk. Before he went out again, twenty-four hours later, he had got hold of a Hand that helped him to his feet. He had heard words of hope—of Him who came to seek not the righteous, but sinners. He had taken new heart, and begun a new upward climb. All

that was sixteen years ago. Some of you know that man today. All of you have heard him speak."

Then as the Superintendent sat down the great audience realized that they had listened to the result of Christ's forgiving love in the life of that superintendent himself. Samuel H. Hadley found the pearl of great price and sold all he had, his rags and his sins, and his self-will, and bought the peace that passeth understanding. The pearl of great price made him one of God's saints.

Men and women of every race and clime have found this priceless pearl.

A former Mohammedan priest named Mohammed Allah, who served during the World War in France, wrote to an English paper this story of his conversion to Christ:

"I was ordained from Mecca a high priest. During the war I came over to England to act as teacher for the men from northeast India. . . . One day I saw a gentleman in a soldier's uniform marching across my camp. I stopped him, and said:

"'Do you know this is a Mohammedan camp? Where are you going?' He smiled.

"I said, 'What is your purpose here today?' He pulled out his card. He was Gipsy Smith. 'Are you an officer?' I asked.

"'I am a chaplain. I came to talk with your people.'

"'What about?'

"'About Christ.'

"'Do you know I can prosecute you without a trial?' The man laughed.

"'Will you stop laughing?'

"He answered, 'That's my way.' Oh, my brothers and sisters, if every Christian would carry a smile on his face he would convert somebody. He said, 'May I shake hands with you?'

"'No, sir. If I touch you, I'll have to bathe fourteen different times.'

"'May I ask you one question? Has Mohammed been dead?'

"'Yes.'

"'Has he risen from the dead?'

"'No, but we expect him to set up his kingdom one thousand years later.'

"'Never mind about that. Do you believe that Christ has been dead?'

"'Yes.'

"'Well, Christ has risen from the dead and is today a living Saviour.'

"I was angry. 'Will you take your Christ and leave at once?' I demanded. He said good-by and started away, then he came back and left a little pamphlet on the table. I watched him go. I have seen millions of people, but I haven't seen any one like him. He had a different look. After he was gone, I began to think, What kind of a man is he?

"I picked up the pamphlet and began to read. It was nothing else but an interpretation of John 3:16. I began to study. For seven months I studied. Every time I went to the table John 3:16 was standing before me. When I preached to my people, it was standing there. One night I put my rug down and started to kneel down toward Mecca. It was twelve o'clock at night. There seemed to be a great, strange light in camp. I got up and asked the people if they saw any light. They didn't. I thought I was imagining it. I went back the second time. The light was greater than before, and there was a voice ringing in my soul, 'Don't pray toward Mecca any more. Christ is the Son of God.'

"I went to Gipsy Smith, and I said, 'I want to shake hands. I do believe Christ is the Son of God.' He said, 'Let us pray.' I have heard praying, but none like that.

"Do you know, there is only one religion that brings peace and harmony in the human heart? It is the religion of Jesus Christ."

My friends, this pearl of great price which has brought peace and joy to hundreds of millions during the last two thousand years, is for you here and now as you read. You need not wait until some special time of revival. The ever living Christ who told this story is still knocking at the door of sinful hearts, even at your heart. Rise up

and let Him in, and sorrow and sin shall be cast out, the richest treasures of the heart of God shall be yours forever, and there shall be set on your breast the pearl of great price, and you will be able to sing with Albert Fitzgerald:

"Nearer, still nearer, lowly I bend,
Did ever sinner have such a Friend?
This friend is Jesus, bless His dear name,
Yesterday, always, forever the same.

"Nearer, still nearer, Sun of my soul,
Oh, the sweet rapture, I am made whole.
Cleansed by the blood, free from all sin,
Faithful till death, a crown I shall win.

"Nearer, still nearer, sweetly I sing,
Higher and higher, mounting on wing.
Love so amazing, passing belief,
Precious while living, thrice precious in death.

"Nearer, still nearer, Heaven at last,
Earth with its follies forever now past,
Jesus, the precious, appears to my view.
Listen, dear sinner, He died to save you."

VI

SALVATION COMES THROUGH PRAYER:

Christ's Stories of the Midnight Friend, the Importunate Widow, and the Pharisee and the Publican

"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee? I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you."—Luke 11 : 5-10.

"And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for awhile: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming. And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is long suffering over them? I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily."—Luke 18 : 1-8.

"And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God,

I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me, a sinner, I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—LUKE 18:9-14.

THE Bible is a marvelous book of prayer. Prayers of Moses and Joshua; prayers of David and Solomon; prayers of Elijah and Elisha; prayers of Daniel and Nehemiah; prayers of Jesus; prayers of Stephen; prayers of the hundred and twenty in the upper room that brought Pentecost; prayers of Paul. How the prayers of the Bible live in the hearts of good men and good women all around the globe, as indestructible and full of life as the Bible itself! The Bible is unique. There is no other book like it. Bishop Charles H. Fowler in one of those bursts of irresistible eloquence of which he was capable, said:

"Marvelous book! Itself a parallel of every miracle and deliverance recorded in its pages. Proscribed and imprisoned? The angel of deliverance illumined the darkness, stripped off the shackles and awed into conscious obedience the self-opening doors. Exiled, it has created a new kingdom and shifted the center and balance of power. Carried away captive, it has broken down rival altars and overthrown false gods till the right-of-way has been accorded to it by friend and foe. Sold into bondage by false brethren, it has captured the hearts of its masters and ascended the throne of dominion. Driven into the sea, it has gone over dry-shod, seeing its enemies overwhelmed in the flood and itself singing the glad song of deliverance. Burned on the public square by the public executioner, it has risen phoenix-

like and floated away in triumph, wearing the smoke of its own funeral pyre as a flag of victory.

"Scourged from city to city, it has gone through the capitals of the civilized world, leaving behind it a trail of light attesting its divine authority. Cast into the lepers' pesthouse, it has purified the scales of contagion, restored the soft, pink skin of smiling infancy, quickened the energies of romping youth, and re-created the sinews of heroic manhood. Betrayed by a kiss, it has stood erect in the calm majesty of eternity, amid the swarming minions of its enemies. Nailed to a felon's cross, it has illumined the darkness by the radiance of its own glory, and transformed the summits of sacrifice into a throne of universal judgment. Sealed into the gloom of a sepulcher, it has come forth with the echoing footsteps of Almighty God, rising to dominion over all intelligences. Marvelous book, full of divine life and power! No one can touch even the hem of its garment without being healed. No one can come near enough even to stone it without being blessed. It stands alone, without a rival; even its enemies themselves being judges."

And of all the Bible, there is nothing more interesting, more significant to the salvation of our souls, than this wonderful theme of prayer we are to study through these beautiful stories which Jesus Himself tells us.

This first story of the midnight friend was told in connection with the giving of the most famous prayer in human history, commonly known as the "Lord's Prayer."

One of the disciples had requested Jesus to teach them how to pray, and after our Lord had repeated to them that most oft-repeated of all prayers, He told them this story of the midnight friend, and followed it with the assurance which has comforted the hearts of innumerable millions of men and women through all the ages since that time: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;

knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Is not the supreme message of this story of the midnight friend this great truth that prayer is not a form but a force? Ask and you receive; seek and you find; knock and the door opens. Wat Tyler has written a poem on prayer that would do for a spiritual biography of very many of us:

I

"There was a man who prayed—
Prayer is an asking of the Infinite—
And he asked for many things.
Life was for him,
As you and me,
A bit of beach
Beside a sea,
Where all the tides come tumbling in.
If one seek well,
Amid the sand,
Gems may be found,
Wealth, Power, Fame,
And all the rest,
Are sparkling stones
The sea brings in—
Torn from its caves,
Laughed up by the waves,
Spilled on the sands,
When all the tides come flashing in.

For these he prayed—
Prayer is an asking gifts from God—
For wealth he prayed;
For love he prayed;
For health; success; for fame;
For space to strut
And preen himself,
While all the world admired.
And many of his prayers were heard.
Men approved, nor
Did God deny.

II

"There was a man who prayed—
Prayer is crying in the night—
And need had he for prayer,
For all his beach—
His little stretch
Of sand and sea—
Was tempest torn,
Howled with the storm,
And all the tides were ebbing out.
For help he prayed;
For hope he prayed;
For dawn he prayed;
And asked, and asked,
And asked with tears,
That death might spare
A life he loved.
Many of his prayers were heard,
But not the last.
That was but added
To all the wails
That filled the night.
Thus he shivered through the storm
Till morning came,
With hope, and he
Knelt down with thanks
Upon a beach,
Tideless and bare,
Gray and desolate.

III

"And now the man still prays—
Prayer is the heartbeat of the soul—
Not fame he craves,
Nor wealth, nor power,
Nor peace desires.
(Worthless are gems,

The one he loved is gone.)
Nor safety begs,
Ah! One fears death but once.
So he moves on
His tiny stretch
Of beach beside
An endless sea,
And notes not that the tides come in,
And cares not that the tides go out.
But prays
That he may tear
The evil from
His heart before
It spawns in deeds;
That he may think
Kind things to do
Before it is too late.
And all his prayers have answer quick—
Almost before he prays.
The prayer that holds
All prayer in his,
And thus he prays:
That He who grants,
And he who asks,
And prayer itself,
May all be one."

Then we have this second story of the unrighteous judge and the importunate widow who in her helplessness does not give up but with patient persistence brings her cause before the judge who can save her if he will, until at last because of her persistence he yields and she wins her case. So Jesus declares that if we will not weary in our prayers, but will patiently and persistently bring our petitions to our heavenly Father, He will give us abundantly all we need. Are there not many who fail at this very point of persistence in prayer? At a revival season when many are pledging themselves to Bible reading and family worship you set

up the family altar and for a time how it sweetened every opening day! But when the busy season came on and your business pressed heavily, you thought you had not time for family prayers, and so the altar that would have blessed your home as the Ark of God once blessed the home of Obed-edom so long ago, fell into ruins of neglect. It is the attitude of persistent opening of the heart to God, giving love and seeking the revelation of God's own heart for our peace and comfort, that makes prayer the highway of salvation to our souls.

Lowell B. Hazzard has written a poem with spiritual insight about that attitude on the part of Mary of Bethany who loved to sit at the feet of Jesus and about whom Jesus said to her sister Martha: " Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Hazzard gives us a glimpse into the Master's heart and into Mary's prayerful attitude which won that immortal commendation:

" 'Art hungry, Lord?
For if thou'rt hungry and wilt say the word,
I can bring food in plenty, wine and grain.
Fruit from the garden, and a lamb new slain,
And in a moment I can spread the board.
Art hungry, Lord?

" 'Art hungry, Lord?'
The Master laid His fingers on her hair,
Thoughtful a moment let them linger there,
And then with grave, sweet voice, 'Aye, Mary, aye,
Though I have meat to eat you know not of,
Hungry—for love.'

"Hungry—for love!
Months grow to years, and centuries roll away,
And still mankind is busy, day by day,
Building the Master houses, stone or wood,
Giving him gifts as seemeth to them good,
In lieu of love.

"In lieu of love!
He takes the gifts, for they are freely given.
And with a strange, sad smile He waits in heaven,
Waits till mankind shall choose the better part,
And opening wide the portals of its heart,
Shall give him love."

May God hasten that glad day! And we must each one of us remember that we are a part of the world and that it is made up of people such as we are, and we are in duty bound to so live that, if all other men and women were like us, God would find perfect peace and happiness in the heart of the world.

But, some one will say, both these stories seem to be for people who are already acquainted with God. I am a sinner. My life has lost its purity even from childhood. All my life I have been going away from God. How can I pray? Ah, my friend, we have a third story, the very best story of all, reserved for you—the story Jesus tells about the Pharisee and the publican who went up the same hour to the temple and were praying at the same time. Get the story into your heart. The Pharisee prays with himself and to himself. God was not there. It was a self-righteous, self-congratulatory prayer. In a formal way he thanked God that he had so many negative vir-

tues and was so much better than this poor publican who with bowed head was smiting his breast with his hand in an agony of repentance. He did not really thank God, he congratulated God that he had such a swell worshiper as he was. Alas! how many poor, lean, self-righteous people there are who do not really pray to God, but, like this Pharisee, pray with themselves and congratulate themselves in the house of God. They shut the door of heaven in their own faces even in the house of prayer. But the publican realized that he was a sinner. He had nothing to commend him in the sight of God. It was not justice he needed, but mercy. So he cries, "God, be thou merciful unto me, a sinner!" He was in dead earnest. In the language of the street of today, he was up against it. There was only one chance for him, and that was in the pure mercy of God. Such a prayer offered in that genuine spirit of repentance and confession never goes unanswered.

David once prayed a prayer like that. It was when David had sinned against God through yielding to the lowest desires of his nature. He stood in danger of utter ruin. Then Nathan, an honest messenger of God, came and pictured an outrageous sinner and looking David straight in the eye, said: "Thou art the man!" Then David saw his sin and his awful danger, and cried out to God in agony: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight."

Saul of Tarsus knew that same spirit of repentance when, on the way to Damascus, he was smitten down at noonday and heard the voice from above saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" and when he knew it was Jesus, humbly asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

And this publican Jesus tells us about has the same spirit when he cries, "God, be thou merciful unto me, a sinner."

It brought forgiveness to David. It brought forgiveness to Saul and transformed him into Paul the great missionary of early Christianity. It brought forgiveness to the publican, eased the agony of his soul, and sent him down to his house justified. And you! whoever you are, man or woman, or whatever your sin, if you will in true repentance and honest confession offer that prayer for mercy in Jesus' name, you, too, shall find forgiveness unto your soul's salvation.

This sermon is done, and yet I am loath to stop. I fear some buoyant boy or laughing girl, brought up to know about the Bible and Jesus, and yet who has never definitely given his or her heart to the Saviour, may read it and say, "None of these stories fit my case."

To you, O youth, with your face toward the morning, I preach the blessed Christ who is ready to take your hand and lead you on into manhood and womanhood, making all joys brighter and all

life an ever more glorious adventure. Louise Driscoll sings a song of *The Laughing Prayer:*

"The sorry prayers go up to God
Day after weary day,
They whimper through the eternal blue
And down the milky way.

"Deaf to the music of the stars,
The children of desire.
Beggars before the Throne of God,
They wait for God to tire.

"The proletariat of Heaven
Swarmed in the golden street
One day when Michael's host came by
Up to the Judgment Seat.

"Above the heavenly mansions
Bright, streaming banners flowed,
While Cherubim and Seraphim
Were crowding in the road.

"And then a little, laughing prayer
Came running from the sky,
Along the golden gutters where
The sorry prayers went by.

"It had no fear of anything,
But in that holy place
It found the very Throne of God
And smiled up in His face.

"Then Michael waited in the road,
For Michael understood,
While God looked on the laughing prayer
And found it sweet and good.

"So God was comforted. He said:
'There still is hope for men.
One man prays happily!' And so
He turned to care again."

Offer that happy prayer to God in this very hour.

VII

GOD'S TITLE TO ME:

Christ's Story of God's Ownership of Man

"But who is there of you, having a servant plowing or keeping sheep, that will say unto him, when he is come from the field, Come straightway and sit down to meat; and will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank the servant because he did the things that were commanded? Even so ye also, when ye have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do."—Luke 17:7-10.

THERE is much talk in these days about the subconscious mind, but what we all need more than anything else is the divine-conscious mind. To live conscious of the presence of God in the world and in us is to insure our living on a high, noble plane where we will fill our mental and spiritual lungs with an atmosphere surcharged with life and power.

I was led to prepare this sermon by the decision of the Attorney-General of the United States that the property which formerly belonged to a little Hungarian Church in Austria-Hungary was being improperly held by the Custodian of Alien Property, an office which came into being during the great World War.

The Attorney-General decided that this property

should never have been seized on account of war, because the title to it was " vested in God." That phrase, " vested in God," fastened in my mind and challenged my thought and would not down. I began to think of the things that belong to God and at last the questioning became personal, and I began to search for certain suggestions or traces of God's title to me.

Of course I immediately recalled the abstract of title set forth in the Bible. I find there recorded that God has a deed to me because He is the Creator of my body and the Father of my spirit. I also accept the title that comes through the redemption by the atoning love of God in Jesus Christ.

But that is not the line of evidence of title I wish to pursue at this time. It is always a great comfort to me if I can find in my own nature, in my own mind and heart, that which backs up the statements of God's revealed word in the Bible.

And it is of infinite joy to me, and a comfort beyond all words to describe, to find that the title to my own self is vested in God from certain witnessing traits and characteristics of my own soul.

I

One of these is a certain haunting homesickness of my soul that cannot be appeased or satisfied by worldly successes. And I find that my greatest growth both in strength of personality and purity of spirit comes from that discontent and dissatis-

faction. The storms and struggles of life from which I would escape, if I could, are necessary to lift me into my better self and develop within me the higher type of character of which I am capable. I would love to take life easy, but to do that is to stagnate; and only by rising into a working fellowship with Him who is the one ceaseless Worker in the universe, do I rise to the best that is within me. I have to thank God for the storms that stir my pool of life and keep it wholesome with the curative powers from heaven. Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer has a poem of rare insight which he calls *The Waters of Bethesda.* He sings:

"My spirit was a troubled pool
That stirred with every passing wind,
And I was thirsty for the cool,
Green depths of a long tranquil mind.

"Now let me rest, I cried, and sleep,
While hours that vanish one by one
Marshall the stars across the deep,
And the still beauty of the sun.

"Let there be no more rain to fill
My rocky chalice, harsh and brown;
Let me know quietness until
The warm earth-mother drinks me down.

"There came a silence everywhere,
And no clouds sailed and no wind stirred.
Sun and stars shone stark and bare—
I had the answer to my word.

"All night the stars stabbed through the dark,
All day the sun shot from the sky,
Swift, molten arrows to its mark—
The lidless circle of my eye.

"In the white torment where it lay
My troubled spirit learned, poor fool,
The glory of that stormy day
When passing angels stirred the pool."

II

A second trace of God's title to me in my own nature is in the fact that I never grow, never really progress and mature, unless I dare to express my very self without fear of consequences, and that I never give genuine expression of my real self without becoming a larger and better man. Real growth in manhood or womanhood can come only from self-utterance, self-expression.

I was reading awhile ago an editorial comment in an Eastern paper, in which the editor with very keen insight enlarged on the statement of a judge who, the day before, had said in a decision concerning certain fervent love-letters that had been read in court that the defendant had, at least, " slopped over." The editorial philosopher brought out the fact that, after all, self-expression, even if it sometimes " slopped over," was an indication of growth and possible greatness far surpassing what was possible for one so hidebound by conventional life that he becomes a slave to what Carlyle bitterly calls " the mechanical spirit of the age." And he suggested that there never was a poet, small or great, who did not, at the start, slop over most vilely. There is no surer trace of our divine parentage than the fact that for a man to really live is to express himself; and the man who can express himself most, lives most.

No one perfectly expresses himself but God, and He does it with marvelous prodigality and aban-

don. When He expresses Himself in rain, He does not count the drops, but pours forth the wealth of the clouds on the thirsty earth. In the glory of the springtime He gladdens our eyes with a hundred apple blossoms for every apple which will finally ripen on the tree. When He expresses Himself in power, He pours rivers over giant precipices at Shoshone and Niagara. When He expresses Himself in the sky, He flings thousands of suns and planets and worlds and stars into space, yet watches over them as a mother does over her fireside brood. When God expresses Himself in summer and autumn, He riots in colors and paints pictures that charm us beyond words. He makes every wayside forest and ripening field a thing of beauty; but when He has for His canvas a range of hills like the Berkshires, or mountains like the Cascades or the Rockies, His crimsons and yellows and bronzes tell to every eye that God, the Great Artist, has passed this way.

Now I am so like God that I must express myself, if I am to grow and show the real material that is within me. I must take the risk of over-expression, of "slopping over," if I am ever to be the man I ought to be, that God meant me to be. Niggardliness of life, timid refusal to give out energy and emotion, to put forth my best powers, that is as mean and contemptible as the characteristic which has its origin in cowardice. Prodigality of life is a glorious thing, and life-energy carries

with it in itself the elements for the correction of its own mistakes.

Now, at the bottom, the fear of " slopping over " is the dread of making one's self ridiculous. But no one ever achieved anything of the highest value without running the risk of ridicule. Think of the story of inventors like Galileo, of explorers like Columbus, of pioneers, agitators, saints, martyrs, prophets and heroes without number, who have been laughed at, scorned, persecuted, imprisoned and slain by their own time, to be canonized and glorified by the children of the generation that cast them out. God has made me so like Himself that I can only really live by giving full and honest expression to the simmering, seething forces that have their fountain in God and in my own soul.

III

I find another trace of God's title in me in the wonderful fact that when I express myself in service of blessing to others, I add most to my own joy and gladness. That not by hoarding my joy, but by expressing it, by pouring it forth, by giving it away, I most surely keep it in my own personality.

I find that when I prodigally pour out all the joy and courage and gladness I can summon from within myself, not only on my friends but on strangers, not only on those who have a claim on me but those who have not, there comes back flooding my own mind and heart a multiplied wealth of

joy and sunshine. I find that when I give with open hand whatever God has given me to give, in laughter and love, there comes back into my own heart all the laughter and gladness from all the hearts I have blessed.

It was said of a great English statesman after he was dead, referring to the warmth of his soul, " He lit so many fires in cold rooms." That is to be like God, whose smile kindles the universe. And when I find that my greatest joy comes not from selfishness, but from unselfish service of others' need, I know that the title to my nature—my very self—is vested in God.

IV

Another trace of God's title to me I find in the fact that my real joy is not in material but in spiritual things. Not in thinking of lands or goods or money do I really exultingly live, but my real joy is in the kingdom of my own soul; the kingdom of God is within me. The story of mankind has proved beyond all question that man can be perfectly happy and victorious without the material successes for which men strive. St. Francis of Assisi, as Renan has said, was, next to Jesus, the sweetest soul that ever walked this earth, and he condemned himself to hunger and rags. But even then in the forest and the lonely glen the birds used to welcome him to be their friend and companion. And there are tens of thousands of men and women

today who would be infinitely happier living as he did on bread and water and the cresses that grow by the mountain brook than living in a mansion at the cost of giving up the glory and joys of the higher mental and spiritual life.

James Martineau brings out with beautiful clearness, in what he aptly calls "the friendships of history," how blessed the humblest man or woman may be who lives in the mind and heart rather than in the noisy, dusty street of materialism.

"He that cannot leave his workshop or his village," says Martineau, "let him have his passport to other centuries, and find communion in a distant age; it will enable him to look up into those silent faces that cannot deceive, and take the hand of solemn guidance that will never mislead or betray. The ground-plot of a man's own destiny may be closely shut in, and the cottage of his rest small; but if the story of this old world be not quite strange to him—if he can find his way through its vanished cities to hear the pleadings of justice or watch the worship of the gods; if he can visit the battle-fields where the infant life of nations has been baptized in blood; if he can steal into the prisons where the lonely martyrs have waited for their death; if he can walk in the garden or beneath the porch where the lovers of wisdom discourse, or be a guest at the banquet where the wine of high converse passes around; if the experiences of his own country and the struggles that consecrate the very soil beneath his feet are no secret to him; if he can listen to Latimer at Paul's Cross, and tend the wounded Hamden in the woods of Chalgrove, and gaze, as upon familiar faces, at the portraits of More and Bacon, of Vane and Cromwell, of Owen, Fox and Baxter,—he consciously belongs to a grander life than could be given by territorial possession; he venerates an ancestry auguster than a race of kings; and is richer in the sources of character than any prince or monarch."

Oh, my friends, this inner realm of glorious life is possible to us all. Let us live up to God's title in us and our title in Him. It is not enough to

have a good creed. We must set our faith out in the garden of our souls and let it grow and blossom in our thinking, in our affections, and in our deeds. Many people today who are not keeping pace with their own time remind one of a character in the *Autobiography of Mark Rutherford,* whose ideas acquired long ago had " never fructified in him, but were like hard stones which rattled in his pocket."

We must set ourselves against anything in our own time or environment that would frustrate God's title in us.

Margot Asquith tells how she once met a tramp and asked him how he decided which way he would tramp, and his answer was, " I always turn my back to the wind." That was what made him a tramp. He never had had the courage to breast the wind and go courageously on in its teeth, or he would have ceased to be a tramp and have become a man. Alas, many people with plenty of money in their pocket are only tramps who always turn their backs to the wind and thus lose the real joy and achievement of life.

It is a great thing to face life conscious of God, and at one with Him in our aim and purpose. A man who does not love God and who does not seek to work in harmony with God is always having a bear fight going on in his own soul which makes peace impossible.

H. G. Wells tells of his meeting with Theodore

Roosevelt and describes "the friendly peering snarl of his face like a man with the sun in his eyes."

It is good to live facing the sun. With such a man or woman the head may grow gray, but there will always be summer in the heart, and in that garden of faith there will be fragrant blossoms and inspiring songs of radiant birds of hope and promise.

So in faith and sincerity let us live into our life's canvas the picture God would have us paint. As Edgar A. Guest so graphically portrays:

"Sunshine and shadow and laughter and tears,
These are forever the paints of the years,
Splashed on the canvas of life day by day,
We are the artists, the colors are they.
We are the painters, the pigments we use
Never we're wholly permitted to choose.
Grief with its gray tint and joy with its red
Come from life's tubes to be blended and spread.

"Here at the easel, the brushes at hand,
Each for a time is permitted to stand.
White was the canvas when first we began,
Ready to picture the life of a man.
Now we are splashing the pigments about,
Knowing the reds and the blues must give out,
Soon we must turn to the dull hues and gray,
Painting the sorrows that darken the way.

"Now with the sunshine and now with the shade
Slowly but surely the picture is made.
Even the gray tints with beauty may glow
Recalling the joy of the lost long ago.
Let me not daub it with doubt and despair,
Deeds that are hasty, unkind and unfair,
But when the last bit of pigment is dried
Let me look back at my canvas with pride.

"Let me when trouble is mine to portray,
Dip, with good courage, my brush in the gray;

After the tears and the grief let there be
Something of faith for my children to see.
Lord, let me paint not in anger or hate,
Grant me the patience to work and to wait,
Make me an artist, though humble my style,
And let my life's canvas show something worth while."

But if it bears something worth while, it will be because we give ourselves in full surrender to do our duty as the servants of Jesus Christ. You say, " What can I do? " I answer, " Do the duty that is next your hand! " God will take care of the result. It is in reach of the humblest layman to work miracles of salvation if he will seize hold on the power of God through prayer. A man unknown to fame was Edward Graves, a commercial traveler, but he was a faithful servant of God and kept a prayer list that he talked to God about every day. One day he asked S. M. Sayford, a merchant to whom he sold goods, to let him have his name on his prayer list. Sayford wrote his autograph without any intention of becoming a Christian, but a little after he was converted. He in turn won C. K. Ober to Christ, and C. K. Ober won John R. Mott, and that Christian statesman, John R. Mott, has been the cause of thousands of men giving their hearts to Jesus.

You belong to God. I call upon you in Christ's name to make good in service for God! At it, in a whole-hearted service!

VIII

FORGIVENESS—THE MOST LOVABLE OF ALL THE GRACES:

Christ's Story of a Forgiving King and an Unforgiving Servant

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith unto him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."
—Matthew 18: 23-35.

PETER, the fisherman whom Jesus chose as one of His disciples, was a most inquiring and curious-minded man. He was always starting something. This is constantly illustrated

in the Gospel story. Does Jesus come walking on the storm-tossed sea at night to rescue His affrighted disciples? You may be sure it is Peter who wonders if he could not walk on the water, too, and who calls out to the Master, "Bid me to come to you on the water."

Is Jesus talking to them about the conditions of discipleship, and how necessary it is for a man to make his religion the greatest thing in his life, and remarks, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God"? You may be sure it was Peter who at once begins to wonder what is going to happen to people who have given up all their fishing boats and nets in order to follow Christ, and who blurts out: "Lo, we have left all and followed thee; what, then, shall we have?"

You may be certain that something interesting is going to turn up if Peter is in the crowd.

Take this occasion: Jesus was talking to the disciples about forgiveness, and trying to make clear to their minds God's willingness to forgive the sinner. In the course of the conversation He tells that unforgetable story of the lost sheep—how a man had a hundred sheep under his care, and when he came home one night, and turned them into the fold, there were only ninety-and-nine. What will the shepherd do about it? Will he go in contentedly and eat his supper and go to sleep in comfort? No, indeed! He will go back over the trail

of the day, even though it is dark, and call and seek after the lost sheep until he finds it, and when he finds it, he will laugh for joy and lift the sheep to his shoulder and come home through the black night with a happy heart because he has found the sheep that was lost. So Jesus says it is with God over a lost man who is won back from sin. All heaven rejoices over one repenting sinner brought back to God.

And then Jesus proceeds to make the story practical to them. He tells them that if ever one of their brothers wrongs them they must go and remonstrate with him. And if he is reasonable, they will have won their brother back in friendship and love. But if he is unreasonable, and will not listen, take one or two mutual friends along and talk it over together; and if he is utterly unreasonable still, bring it before the church and try to settle it there. He goes on to tenderly show them that these earthly settlements of our troubles with our fellows will affect the eternal life in heaven, and that in all such efforts to allay strife and bring about peace and love they may be sure God is interested, and closes by saying, " For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them "—one of the sweetest promises in all the Bible.

Now Peter had been listening to all this with a great deal of interest, until he was ready to explode with questions. I suspect Peter had had a good

deal to bear from some of the men who, like himself, were following after Christ. Some one had pestered him about as long as he thought he could stand it. It may have been the greed of Judas, or the radical ways of that queer old Bolshevist, Simon the Zealot, or the dour gloom of Thomas,—I am only guessing, of course; but some one had been stepping on Peter's toes and not treating him right, until he wondered if he had not stood it long enough. And so this talk of Christ's about forbearance and forgiveness got on Peter's nerves. He stood it as long as he could, and then he burst out with his question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?" I expect Peter's special pest, whom he had in mind, had already seven delinquencies to his discredit, and Peter felt that next time he would have to strike back at him; so he set the limit at seven times. How amazed he must have been at the answer of Jesus: "I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven." Which was in substance: "Oh, Peter, it is not a case where you can count times against your brother. Suppose God did that way with you, what hope would you have?"

Then Jesus tells this interesting and illustrative story about a king who decided it was time to balance accounts with his servants who had been intrusted with his affairs; and in the course of the investigation one came before him who owed him

the immense sum of ten thousand talents, and he was utterly unable to make settlement, and the king at first decided that the man and his wife and his children should all be sold into slavery to help make up the amount he was in debt. But when the man fell on his knees and begged for mercy, the king's heart relented and he forgave him and entirely remitted the immense debt and mercifully gave him a new chance.

But the man who received this merciful treatment was unworthy of it. Instead of these showers of kindness sinking deep into his heart and making the soil of his soul mellow with tenderness, they fell upon a rock; and when he went out from the king's presence it was not with a heart fragrant with gratitude and love for the mercy he had received, but with a heart smarting with wrath and indignation because he had had to humiliate himself.

Just then he ran across a man who owed him the small sum of a hundred shillings, and he seized him rudely by the throat and said, "Pay what thou owest." And when the man, following his own example, fell down and besought him, saying, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee," he would not listen to his cries for mercy, but threw his debtor into prison till he should pay the last farthing of his debt.

Now, their fellow-servants, knowing the mercy the first man had received from the king in for-

giveness for his much greater debt, and seeing the hard-hearted treatment he was meting out to his fellow-servant, went and told the king the facts. And we do not wonder that the king sent for him and said, " Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? " And the king was filled with indignation and delivered him up to prison until his debt should be paid. And our text is the comment of Jesus on this story: " So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

I

On this question of forgiveness Jesus declares there is one law for God and man. If you want to know how you should forgive your fellow-man, you have only to find out how God forgives. Let us study for a little how God forgives. Hear God saying in Isaiah, the forty-third chapter, " I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions." And again, " I will not remember thy sins." You have seen a teacher at the blackboard fill it with figures and then take the sponge or the eraser and blot it all out until not one figure remained. So God says, " I will blot out your transgressions." And lest some poor sinner might shiver with fear that in His infinite wisdom the mind of God still

retained the impression made by his sins, God says: "I will not remember thy sins." That is the way God forgives.

Hezekiah is quoted in the thirty-eighth chapter of Isaiah as saying in his written experience of God's mercy, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." That is the way God forgives.

Listen to David in the one hundred and third Psalm, as he tells his experience of God's forgiveness:

"As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

And Paul in his letter to the Hebrews, in the tenth chapter, quotes God as saying: "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

That is the way God forgives. But I hear some one say, "I am ready to believe that God forgives like that, but it is too much to expect of human nature to imagine that a man can forgive that way. It is all an idle dream." A dream, yes, but not an idle dream. It is God's dream and good enough to come true.

"Dreams are they—but they are God's dreams!
Shall we decry them and scorn them?
That men shall love one another,
That white shall call black man brother,
That greed shall pass from the market-place,
That lust shall yield to love for the race,
That man shall meet with God face to face—
Dreams are they all,
But shall we despise them—
God's dreams!

" Dreams are they—to become man's dreams!
Can we say nay as they claim us?
That men shall cease from their hating,
That war shall soon be abating,
That the glory of kings and lords shall pale,
That the pride of dominion and power shall fail,
That the love of humanity shall prevail—
Dreams are they all,
But shall we despise them—
God's dreams! "

II

God's mercy to us in forgiving our sins must create in us a spring of mercy that shall burst forth in an overflowing stream of forgiving love to others.

It is wonderful how the man who really repents of his own sin toward God and finds forgiveness through Jesus Christ immediately finds his hard heart melted into sympathy and tenderness.

Do you remember how Paul and Silas, beaten and bloody from wounds until they were half dead, were handed over to the hard-hearted Roman jailer at Philippi, and how that brutal man put them, helpless and suffering as they were, into the inner cell and thrust their feet into the stocks and left them for the night? Do you recall how they prayed to God and sang songs at midnight, and how when the earthquake came and shook the locks to pieces on the prison doors and the prisoners came running into the lobby of the jail, Paul and Silas with them, and the jailer, thinking they would all escape and he would lose his head, drew his sword to commit suicide, Paul took command and

cried to the jailer, "Do thyself no harm, we are all here"? Do you remember how the jailer fell on his knees at Paul's feet and cried: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and Paul and Silas with one voice shouted: "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." And the jailer repented and God forgave him then and there.

And see what happened! He had been so hard-hearted a few hours before that he had thrust their poor, bleeding feet into the stocks in the inner cell and left them to starve in agony. But now, since God's forgiveness has come to him, he rushes away after water and oil and bandages and tenderly washes and cleanses their wounds and ministers to their comfort. And after midnight as it is, he will not rest until he has set food before them and made all the amends possible for his cruelty.

That is the effect God's forgiveness ought to have on every one of us who has received forgiveness of his own sins. Witter Bynner sings tenderly of Jesus:

"A poet lived in Galilee,
Whose mother dearly knew him,
And his beauty like a cooling tree
Drew many people to him.

"He had sweet-hearted things to say,
And he was angry only
When people were unkind. That day
He'd stand there straight and lonely.

"And tell them what they ought to do:
'Love other folks,' he pleaded,
'As you love me and I love you;'"
. . . . . .

And we must follow in the footsteps of our Master.

Many people will be kept out of heaven because they will not learn this divine lesson of forgiveness. A ministerial friend of mine, now with God, once told me of a young woman who was greatly moved toward the Christian life in a meeting he was conducting and sought in sorrow for days for the forgiveness of her sins, but was still in great agony of conscience. He conversed with her again and again, trying to help her to saving faith. Finally he said to her: "Are you holding any hard, unforgiving thoughts and feelings against any one?" She jumped as if he had struck her. Her face flamed. He knew that at last he had found the key to her trouble. After a moment's hesitation she said: "Yes, there is one person who has wronged me so badly, so cruelly, that I never can forgive it." "Well, then," said the minister, sadly but tenderly, "God cannot forgive you. Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer that we can only ask God to forgive us as we forgive those who sin against us. We must forgive those who have wronged us before we can ask God to forgive the wrong we have done Him." She went away very sad and depressed.

That afternoon she won the victory in her own soul and wrote a letter of forgiveness to the one who had wronged her; and on the way to the evening service she went by the post-office and dropped the letter in the mail box.

When she met the minister a few minutes later at the church door her face was glowing like the sun as she exclaimed, "It is all right! I am so happy! Jesus is my blessed Saviour! I know my sins are all forgiven!"

The minister inquired, "Tell me, please, just when was the burden of your guilt and gloom lifted?" And she answered with a happy laugh, "Just when I let go of the letter of forgiveness and I knew it was out of my reach on the way to the one who had wronged me."

Are any of you in that same place of danger? Are you allowing the path to forgiveness and salvation to be blocked because of your stubbornness in holding resentment against another? Learn this great lesson now. Remember that Jesus has set us an example of forgiveness beyond all He asks of us.

There is something very pathetic and very Christlike to my mind in the poem that George McClellan, the colored poet, writes to his own people:

"Christ washed the feet of Judas!
Yet all his lurking sin was bare to Him,
His bargain with the priest, and more than this,
In Olivet, beneath the moonlight dim,
Aforehand knew and felt his treacherous kiss.

. . . . . .

"And so if we have ever felt the wrong
Of trampled rights, of caste, it matters not
What e'er the soul has felt or suffered long,
Oh, heart! this one thing should not be forgot:
Christ washed the feet of Judas."

I was once conducting evangelistic services in a town in New England where, notwithstanding the fact that large audiences attended the preaching, there was no marked spiritual outpouring, and calls to sinners to repent and accept Christ went unheeded. I seemed to be up against a stone wall. At last the pastor told me that the real difficulty in saving souls in that community was that two of the leading business men in the town, both members of his church, were greatly embittered against each other and, though they were both officers in his church, did not speak when they met, and the evil influence of this feud hung like a pall of death over the church.

After much thought and earnest prayer, I preached the next Sunday morning on the great importance of a forgiving heart to all who would receive the forgiveness of God or who would be the channel of divine influence in the salvation of others. That afternoon there was a meeting for men only. Just as the meeting was about to open a thrill of excited feeling ran through the audience, as down the central aisle those two men came walking together, arm in arm, and sat down at the front side by side.

Only one of the men had been present in the morning, but the Holy Spirit had carried the message to his heart and he had gone straight to his neighbor's house, and when his neighbor opened the door in amazement at seeing him there, he said:

" John, I have come to ask you to forgive me. The sermon this morning showed me that I was sinning against God by hating you, and I have asked God to forgive me. And now I ask you to forgive me, and let us turn over a new leaf and live together as Christian men ought to live." The neighbor burst into tears and threw his arm about his shoulder and said, " David, I am so glad you came. I stayed away from church because I was ashamed to go, knowing that people were talking about our quarrel. I do forgive you, and I ask you to forgive me!" They prayed together and then came to the church; and as they came down that central aisle that Sunday afternoon the whole audience was moved to the heart, a hundred handkerchiefs went to eyes of strong men unaccustomed to tears, and a blessed revival of religion broke out that very hour, and many were won to Christ.

This represents the high-water mark in Christian experience—to attain the forgiving heart. The supreme mission of the Gospel is to bring the forgiveness of God to sinning men. The old Good Friday scene on Calvary, with its three crosses, is re-enacted all around the world every day of life, Christ atoning for sin, one man accepting forgiveness of sin, and another rejecting Jesus and dying in his sin.

God help us to see clearly the old vision anew today!

"Crosses for three stand on Calvary's brow,
A King and two robbers of old;
One is a Saviour, one scoffs at that Face,
One turns in faith and is saved by His grace,
Sees the rich wonders of glory unfold:—
Sinless, and sinful, and sin-pardoned now.

"Crosses for three face Jerusalem Town;
To each hastens death's doleful toll;
One is a Conqu'ror at close of His strife,
One spurns his chance of a heavenly life,
One wins at last the peace of his soul,
Gains through the Christ the reward of a crown.

"Crosses for three rise again into view,
On Calvary's mountain of love;
One died for sin—with his heart toward His God—
One died in sin—with his face toward the clod—
One died to sin—with his hope from above:—
Crosses for three have their message for you."

IX

THE SHY SINGER AMONG THE GRACES:

Christ's Story Illustrating the Beauty and Value of Humility

"And he spake a parable unto those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place.

"But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

"And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just."—Luke 14:7-14.

THERE is a wistful little poem, written by George Sterling, entitled *The Strange Bird,* which seems to me to suggest some of the rare and beautiful charms of this often neglected grace of humility:

"We are not done disputing yet
Which of us heard its singing first—
A sorrow to a music set,
Welcome as water to a thirst,
Tender as sleep to old regret.

"It was a shy and nameless bird,
And shy and nameless was the song,
By morning twilight often heard
It kept where shadows still were long,
Ready to vanish at a word.

"It sang beside the quieter streams
Of beauty found perpetual—
No loveliness that only seems,
But all that made love beautiful
And life more beautiful than dreams.

"Unseen by darkness as by noon,
It slept, we thought, afar from fears;
Though once we heard, below the moon,
A strain like gladness told in tears,
That rose, and sank, and died too soon.

"We hoped to find that hidden place,
But evening shadows foiled the sight;
Save of the song, we had no trace
Of that cool secrecy of light,
Where silence had a purer grace."

Some one, whose name I do not now recall, has said that the story of a word is as full of romance as the story of some great campaign that has changed the history of nations and remade the world. That would be true of this word humility. Of all the words picturing the great spiritual graces, this has been the most neglected and the most frequently and often the most scornfully snubbed. It has become common in many quarters to regard the word "humility" or "humble" with opprobrium. As though humility were a thing to be ashamed of! If we are to find the rich blessings

for our souls in the songs of this shy singer among the spiritual graces, we must let the sunshine of the Bible view of it warm it and illuminate it until its old glory radiates from it again. We must get into our hearts and minds something of the feeling of Josephine Preston Peabody when she sings:

"Words, Words,
Ye are like birds.
Would I might fold you,
In my hands hold you
Till ye were warm and your feathers a-flutter;
Till, in your throats,
Tremulous notes
Foretold the songs we would utter.

"Words, Words,
Ye are all birds!
Would ye might linger
Here on my finger,
Till I kissed each, and then sent you a-winging;
Wild, perfect flight,
Through morn to night,
Singing and singing and singing!"

There are songs in this sweet old word, "humility," as full of music as a meadow lark in a field of red clover in June, if we can get a vision of its rich heart that is full of comfort and blessing. God help us to find them!

Let us study some of the blessings which come from the cultivation of this grace of humility in our minds and hearts.

I

We will find that it is a rare source of happiness in saving us from an overweening estimate of our own importance. Nothing breeds unhappiness more

certainly than egotism. Self-conceit is a sure trouble-breeder. When we have an exaggerated idea of our own importance, we naturally think that great deference is due to our person and to our opinions, and it becomes hard for us to realize that other people's opinions have equal right of way with our own. We cannot understand how that can be, since we are so important. A very self-conceited man or woman is likely to spend much time in self-pity whenever any plan goes awry.

Nothing is greater folly than self-pity. No time is more hopelessly wasted than the time we spend in being sorry for ourselves. It paralyzes effort to better our condition. You can sit down and weep tears of self-pity all day and not get one step away from your trouble, while if you had gone to work saying in the words of the little rhyme:

"If we sigh about a trouble
It will double day by day.
If we laugh about a trouble
It's a bubble blown away,"

you would have soon gotten into a new territory of hope and sunshine.

Humility saves us from touchiness and sullenness. If we think we are very important people, we resent any one sticking his elbow into our ribs, and are ready either to fight or are heavy and sullen over the insult to our dignity. If we are girded with humility, and are out on the journey of life to be a good companion and helper, a good citizen of the world, we will not make mountains

out of mole hills. We have something better to do than to allow our tempers to be disturbed by the ill-tempered whines of others.

Three small boys were walking along the street, when an older ruffian of a boy came by and, with a sudden sweep of his hand, knocked all their hats off. One boy took to his heels, fearing a still worse fate; one pulled off his coat and started to fight; but the third boy simply picked up his hat, put it on his head, and walked off whistling. That third boy will go far if he keeps that spirit.

If we wish to make sure what the Christian attitude toward the troubles and difficulties of life is, we must go back and see how Christ Himself met them. If any man who ever lived had the right to pity himself, to feel sorry for himself, it was Jesus; and yet so far as we are able to discover He never spent a single hour of His entire life doing it. His life was a constant struggle against opposition. He was tempted and tried by Satan in every way, as we are. Jesus did not hold Himself as too important as the Son of God to endure the hardships that come to the poorest and weakest men and women. He did not shirk. In perfect humility He went into the desert with the wild beasts, and into the wilderness to face the devil, and came out joyously triumphant. Evelyn Knowles says of that wilderness experience of Jesus:

"Here He was tempted, like as we are tried;
Yet, without sin. In those long days and nights,
Kind Patience ministered; Courage forsook Him not.

At length Self-conquest made the triumph sure;
And He stood forth true conqueror of the world,
The flesh, and every evil of its train,
Because of His sole victory over self.

"Dear Father, when this wilderness we face,
And Love invites us, may we never pause,
Nor falter. Thy good angels wait us there,
To guide, encourage, bear us in their hands.

"When we have learned the lessons, fought and won,
Like our great Master, may we forth again
With shining faces lighted from above.
All that was true before will true remain:
Nothing be lost, when self is found in Thee.
The dross consumed is proof that Love doth bless,
When in obedience we face the wilderness."

II

True humility brings great joy into our hearts and lives because under its wise influence we are constantly led to think on the beautiful and good in other people and in things outside of ourselves. The self-absorbed man or woman misses the very richest sources of human joy. When we are humble enough to forget ourselves, and listen and look into the beauty of God's bright universe, we cannot fail to find that God has set it all to music.

"Music is in all growing things
And underneath the silky wings
Of smallest insects there is stirred
A pulse of air that must be heard;
Earth's silence lives, and throbs and sings."

And Emerson says, with rare insight into nature and life:

"Even in the mud and scum of things
There always—always something sings."

The man or the woman who is humble enough to live with this open ear and eye lives more joyously than any selfish person can know or understand.

Some one said of Sir Walter Scott that he enjoyed more in twenty-four hours than most men do in a week. It is an open road to all who will travel thereon.

See how the great souls of the Bible found in this humility and spirit of service indescribable joy—see Paul in Nero's dungeon expecting daily the coming of the headsman as he came to John the Baptist in Herod's prison; Paul, the great missionary to the Gentiles, the splendid statesman and organizer of early Christianity; in what mood is he down there in that damp dungeon where he longs for his cloak? Is he sorry for himself? Is he pitying himself? Does he need to be comforted and consoled? No, indeed! Hear this buoyant, radiant-souled man as he exclaims:

"For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth; but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me to be, or heareth from me. And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Hear him again on another day when he cried out:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life."

Paul's humility means buoyant wings of radiant light.

And Jesus, too, lived in that same buoyant, glad spirit. Paul learned it of Jesus. When Christ came back from His temptation in the wilderness, a great joy possessed His soul. It is often said of Him that He "rejoiced in spirit." And when He came to bid farewell to His disciples, He had no money nor stocks nor lands to give them, so He gave them His joy: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." And again in that last great prayer for His disciples He prays the Father that "they may have my joy made full in themselves." Oh, if we are not living joyously, exultantly in God's world let us examine ourselves. Let us be sure that self-absorption is not blinding our eyes to the riches of God's grace and mercy all about us. Robert Browning in one of his poems describes an egotistical, self-absorbed man who

> *"Shut his fool eyes fast on the visible good*
> *And wealth for certain; opened them owl-wide*
> *On fortune's sole piece of forgetfulness."*

Humility alone can cure that folly and bring at once gratitude and joy to our hearts.

III

Humility is a grace that adds largely and generously to what that rare and joyous man, Robert Louis Stevenson, aptly calls the "Liveableness of Life."

Humility puts us in congenial, workable relations with other people. No one would care to play with a young porcupine, but it is easy to play with a kitten or a puppy. Humility compared with egotism and arrogance is like a kitten compared to a hedgehog as an everyday work-fellow or play-fellow in the affairs of life. How true this is in the life of the home! A home where husband and wife, father and mother and children all stand on their rights, each with his or her quills up to see that no one intrudes or trespasses on their preserves of dignity, is more like hell on earth than like a real home. But how quickly humility sweetens that household! When the husband, forgetting himself, gives all his wisdom and strength to be a source of blessing to his wife, and the wife, forgetting herself, pours the whole stream of her womanhood into inspiration and comfort for her husband, when each finds his or her joy in the joy of the other, then and then only are marriages made in heaven.

The father who in the humility of Jesus seeks to interpret life to his children, not as an arbitrary force but as a loving helper to their wisdom and their joy; and the mother who, seeking not to ar-

rogantly command, but lovingly lead the minds and hearts of her children into strength and goodness, are the parents who come to stand in the place of God to their children and make goodness and heaven seem possible and delightful to them. Humility never shines with such heavenly radiance as in the home. The member of a home group, whether father or mother or son or daughter, who in perfect humility and helpfulness of spirit fulfills Browning's description of one who was

"A happy-tempered bringer of the best
Out of the worst"

is a true saint of God, a fellow of the Royal Order of Humility, than which there is no more blessed society among men.

IV

True humility makes all growth possible in knowledge and enables us to work out the best that is in us. The self-absorbed, self-conceited boy or girl, man or woman, never find their best selves or their noblest possibility of achievement. No one can learn without humility. The boy who thinks he already knows it all has bumped his head against a stone wall and cannot advance. Humility is teachable, and all knowledge and wisdom is open to one who is humble.

Thus humility fills a life with riches beyond the possibility of selfishness to obtain. Who of us has not known men and women who, living day by day

in this spirit of humble, loving service, have become so rich in the rare joy and gladness of spiritual things that they radiated blessing on all who came under their influence?

A friend of mine once told me that one Sunday as she was going out of Boston on a suburban train that was carrying hundreds of people home from churches in the city, two young men sat immediately in front of her who had been to Trinity Church and had listened to a sermon by that great-souled preacher, Phillips Brooks. They were very much stirred by the discourse and by the personality of that truly wonderful man. One of the young men was of the purely superficial type and said to the other, "I envy a man like Brooks." "What do you envy about him?" queried his companion. "Oh, he is such a big man, has such a fine position, gets a big salary, and lives in a fine house." The other turned disgustedly to him and burst forth, "And is that all you envy him for? Plenty of men get bigger salaries and live in bigger houses. I'll tell you what I envy him for. It's the great joy he gets out of living. He knows so much, he's so good, he can help people so much. Why, do you know, life to him is just a great big three-decked meringue pie with whipped cream on top. That's what I envy him for."

My friend, who knew Phillips Brooks, with his rich, glorious manhood, humbly serving multitudes of men and women, and living among them a buoy-

ant, glowing life that made all goodness seem possible, and who fairly exulted in the privilege of serving the most needy of his fellow men, thought that was the best description of the glorious personality of Phillips Brooks she had ever heard.

V

Humility is the open door into friendships of rare power to bless. Dr. George Adam Smith, in his splendid biography of Henry Drummond, one of the most remarkable of modern saints, speaking of Drummond's genius for friendship, gives as the supreme characteristic of it that "he was rich in humility." Gentleness and humility make friends without trying. One of the saddest things one ever reads about a man who has occupied a great and distinguished position is that he has no warm, intimate friends. It is a sad loss. Yet many men and women are too self-absorbed for real friendship. Solomon found out long ago that a man, if he would win friends, must himself be friendly. And Jesus shows His wondrous power to win friendship when He says to His disciples:

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you."

Humility and the wealth of friendship belong together.

VI

Humility is the gateway to honor. Solomon (thinking no doubt of his own youth, for he was called to be king while yet a child), who won his God-given wisdom by his humble prayer, said in later life, "Before honor goeth humility." How clearly Jesus sets this forth in that wonderful incident described by Luke, from which we get our theme:

"And he spake a parable unto those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him,

And he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place.

But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shall thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee.

For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

And thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just."

The Bible is illuminated with wonderful pictures of humility that God has honored. Take the case of Isaiah. He beheld the glory and majesty of God, and all his pride went from him, and he cried out to God,

"Woe is me!" he cried, "for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in midst of a people

of unclean lips." And then in the hour of his humility, "There flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven." Then Isaiah was ready for his great career and the call soon came: "And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go."

Surely in Isaiah's case it was true that humility goeth before honor. John Ruskin says:

"I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power, or hesitation in speaking his opinions; but a right understanding of the relation between what he can do and say and the rest of the world's doing and sayings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it, and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them, only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows that he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Durer writes calmly to one who has found fault with his work, 'It cannot be done better'; Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else; only they do not expect their fellow men therefore to fall down and worship them. They have a curious undersense of powerlessness, feeling that the power is not in them, but through them, that they could not do or be anything else than God made them, and they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful."

God help us to learn this great lesson.

VII

How may I find this beautiful grace that means so much in helpfulness and joy and friendship and honor? The secret is revealed in these words of Paul: "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others."

There is the open highway to humility. C. D. Meigs puts it:

"Lord help me live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayer shall be for—others.

"Help me in all the work I do
To ever be sincere and true
And know that all I'd do for you
Must needs be done for—others.

"Let 'Self' be crucified and slain
And buried deep; and all in vain
May efforts be to rise again
Unless to live for—others.

"And when my work on earth is done
And my new work in heaven's begun,
May I forget the crown I've won
While thinking still of—others.

"Others, Lord, yet others
Let this my motto be,
Help me to live for others
That I may live like Thee."

There is a little story written by a man who in his innocent youth promised to be one of the greatest of English writers, Oscar Wilde. Later, sin wrecked and ruined his promising career; but out of the fruitage of his youth is a story about a young king which illustrates this great theme we are pursuing. It is the story of a king's daughter who married an artist of large genius, and her only child, a son, was kidnapped by order of her father, the old king, and left in a goat-herder's hut to be reared. But after many years, when the proud and wicked old king, who had broken his

daughter's heart, came to die, he sent for the young goat-herd and acknowledged him as heir to the throne. Now this young goat-herd prince had inherited from his artist father a great love for all beautiful things; and when they were planning for his coronation, he gave orders for a wonderful robe of tissued gold, and a ruby-studded crown, and a sceptre with rows and rings of pearls. Thinking about these beautiful things that were to clothe him with glory, he fell asleep and dreamed that he was in a great factory where the workers were driven like half-starved slaves, haggard in their miserable poverty. And when he drew near to see what they were weaving, he started as he saw in the fabric threads of gold, and he asked: "What robe is this thou art weaving? " and to his horror the starving slave answered, " It is the robe for the coronation of the young king." And the prince awoke with a cry of shame.

After awhile he fell asleep again and dreamed that he was lying on the deck of a huge galley rowed by a hundred slaves, and when it had reached its anchor a slave was taken, his feet weighted with lead, his ears filled with wax, and he was thrown overboard and sank into the water. After awhile he came up panting, with a pearl in his right hand. The chief seized the pearl and thrust the slave back into the water. This happened several times, until at last the diver came up bringing in his hand the most wonderful pearl the

young prince had ever seen, but it had cost the diver his life, for even as they seized the treasure from his nerveless hand, the blood gushed from his ears and nostrils and he lay dying on the deck. But the master of the galley smiled and said, as he rubbed the great pearl against his forehead: "It shall be for the sceptre of the young king." When the prince heard that, he woke with a great cry of horror.

Again he fell asleep and dreamed that he stood in the midst of the dried-up bed of a great river, where a multitude toiled and dug and struggled and died of fever and plague, and he asked, "What are these poor creatures seeking?" And one answered, "For rubies for a king's crown." He grew pale and said, "For what king?" And the man answered, "Look in this mirror, and thou shalt see him." The prince looked in the mirror, and seeing his own face, he gave a great cry and awoke.

And a little later, his chamberlain and the high officers of state came in and bowed down before him, and the pages brought him the robe of tissued gold, and set the crown and the sceptre before him. The young king looked at them, and they were indeed beautiful, more beautiful than aught he had ever seen, but he remembered his dreams, and he said to his lords, "Take these things away, for I will not wear them." And they laughed, thinking he jested. But he spoke

sternly, "Take these things and hide them from me. Though it be the day of my coronation, I will not wear them. For on the loom of Sorrow, and by the white hands of Pain, has this robe been woven. There is blood in the heart of the ruby, and death in the heart of the pearl." Then he told them of his three dreams. His courtiers, and even the bishop who was to crown him, begged and plead, but he would not change. And he went and got out the leathern tunic and rough sheepskin cloak that he had worn as a goat-herd. These he put on, and in his hand he took his shepherd's staff, and took a dry branch of sweet rose briar and bent it into a circlet and set it on his head. Then on foot he made his way to the cathedral. He went and stood before the image of Christ, and on his right hand and on his left were the marvelous vessels of gold. He knelt before the image, and the great candles burned brightly by the jewelled shrine, and the smoke of the incense curled in thin blue wreaths through the dome. He bowed his head in prayer. As he prayed, the rebellious nobles and the angry soldiers came with much noise and clamor: "Where is the king who is apparelled like a beggar—this boy who brings shame upon our state? Surely we will slay him, for he is unworthy to rule over us."

And the young king bowed his head and prayed, and when he had finished his prayer he arose, and turning round looked at them sadly. And lo!

through the painted windows came the sunlight streaming upon him, and the sunbeams wove round him a tissued robe that was fairer than the robe that had been fashioned for his pleasure. The dead staff blossomed and bore lilies that were whiter than pearls. The dry thorn blossomed, and bore roses that were redder than rubies. Whiter than fine pearls were the lilies, and their stems were of bright silver. Redder than male rubies were the roses, and their leaves were of beaten gold.

He stood there in the raiment of a king, and the gates of the jewelled shrine flew open, and from the crystal of the many-rayed monstrance shone a marvelous and mystical light. He stood there in a king's raiment, and the glory of God filled the place, and the saints in their carven niches seemed to move. In the fair raiment of a king he stood before them, and the organ pealed out its music, and the trumpeters blew upon their trumpets, and the singing boys sang. The people fell upon their knees in awe, and the nobles sheathed their swords and did homage, and the bishop's face grew pale and his hands trembled. "A greater than I hath crowned thee," he cried as he knelt before him.

The young king came down from the high altar and passed home through the midst of the people. But no man dared look upon his face, for it was like the face of an angel.

The little story has in it a vein of eternal truth. Whosoever learns the lesson of humility by honestly and unselfishly considering the things of others, is transformed through that grace into the beauty and glory of his divine Lord.

X

GOD'S CALL TO MANHOOD:

Christ's Story of the Two Sons

"But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Which of the two did the will of his father? They said, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."—Matthew 21:28-31.

WORK is the law of life. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." All good and happy men are workers. For young men, middle-aged men, and old men work is the normal, God-planned life.

There are two men in the United States whose lives and careers I have watched with great interest for nearly all my own life. They were both strong, well known and influential men when I was a little boy, and their influence and power on the world for good has grown through all the years, and their prestige as an influence and a testimony for righteousness grows greater with the years. Each of these men has lived over ninety years, and yet their force for good is not abated.

David's milestone of threescore years and ten was only a milestone from which to take a new start into still more interesting adventures of usefulness.

One of these men is Charles W. Eliot, President-Emeritus of Harvard University, who has impressed his high, unselfish ideals of manhood on many thousands of young men who have wrought valiantly to uplift and bless our American life. Though for many years Dr. Eliot has been President-Emeritus, he continues to do helpful constructive work, and celebrated his ninetieth year with a new book carrying great essays and addresses all written since he was eighty years old.

The other man who has passed the ninetieth milestone and is going strong is Chauncey M. Depew. When I was pastor in Brooklyn, New York, and later in New York City, I never lost an opportunity to hear and see this remarkable man.

On his ninetieth birthday Chauncey Depew said: "Ninety years old—and glad of it! At twenty a man is raw and green and afraid of that mystery, existence. At ninety he's settled in business, he's surrounded by friends, he's on cordial terms with life. I wouldn't be twenty again for anything in the world. So far in my experience ninety is the ideal age. Perhaps one hundred is even better. I expect to find out."

Depew is president of the Board of Directors of the New York Central Railway System, as he has

been for a generation. He goes to his office every workday at ten and stays until four, the active, working, virile president of one of the greatest working commercial organizations on earth.

Incidentally Depew has been Secretary of State for New York, United States Senator from New York, has turned down such offices as Secretary of State for the United States and American Ambassador to England, but has never loafed in all his ninety years.

When asked what was the sweetest thing and the finest thing life had brought him in his ninety years, he repeated: "The sweetest, the finest thing life has brought me? My friends." He said it without a moment's pause for thought. And when his interviewer asked what decade of his life so far had brought the most happiness, he answered, "The last ten." He chuckled and went on to sum up life: "Life, to be sure, brings unpleasant experiences. Twice over, I have lost everything I had. But the thing that has never failed to comfort me when matters went wrong was what my mother used to say when I came home from school terribly disturbed by some boyhood calamity. My mother was a rigidly religious woman, and a learned one. 'Misfortune,' she told me more than once, 'is sent by God for your discipline, and if you accept misfortune in this spirit you will find that it has done you good.'

"From actual observation and experience I

have found this saying of my mother's to be literally true. If you look upon misfortune as a bit of discipline, you gain wisdom and strength from it.

"At ten years a boy begins to think seriously. At twenty he wonders what he'd best go into, and that's a very grave question. At thirty he's afraid he didn't choose the right career. At forty he generally has a financial smash because he has worked with his nose to the grindstone and didn't notice where his business was headed. At fifty he's on his feet again and sure he chose the right career. At sixty he wonders if he will live to be seventy. At seventy he's prosperous and alert, and he begins to be ambitious; he wants to make something of himself—he goes into politics, for instance. At eighty he begins to think life is pretty good, after all. And at ninety he's sure of it."

I want to call your attention especially to that statement of this great man, that to take the adverse experiences of life as loving discipline from our heavenly Father makes a man or a woman wiser, stronger, and finer in every way. God has this world and this whole universe at work building men and women, and He will not fail on you if you will give Him a fair chance.

Angela Morgan has written a really great poem entitled *When Nature Wants a Man.* Where it reads "Nature" think "God" and you will get its great message.

"When Nature wants to drill a man
And thrill a man
And skill a man,
When Nature wants to mold a man
To play the noblest part;
When she yearns with all her heart
To create so great and bold a man
That all the world shall praise—
Watch her method, watch her ways!
How she ruthlessly perfects
Whom she royally elects;
How she hammers him and hurts him
And with mighty blows converts him
Into trial shapes of clay which only Nature understands—
While his tortured heart is crying and he lifts beseeching hands!—
How she bends, but never breaks,
When his good she undertakes . . .
How she uses whom she chooses
And with every purpose fuses him,
By every art induces him
To try his splendor out—
Nature knows what she's about.

"When Nature wants to take a man
And shake a man
And wake a man;
When Nature wants to make a man
To do the Future's will;
When she tries with all her skill,
And she yearns with all her soul
To create him large and whole . . .
With what cunning she prepares him!
How she goads and never spares him,
How she whets him and she frets him
And in poverty begets him . . .
How she often disappoints
Whom she sacredly anoints,
With what wisdom she will hide him,
Never minding what betide him
Though his genius sob with slighting and his pride may not forget!
Bids him struggle harder yet.
Makes him lonely
So that only
God's high messages shall reach him
So that she shall surely teach him
What the Hierarchy planned,
Though he may not understand

Gives him passions to command—
How remorseless she spurs him,
With terrific ardor stirs him
When she poignantly prefers him!

"When Nature wants to name a man
And fame a man
And tame a man;
When Nature wants to shame a man
To do his heavenly best . . .
When she tries the highest test
That her reckoning may bring—
When she wants a god or king!—
How she reins him and restrains him
So his body scarce contains him
While she fires him
And inspires him!
Keeps him yearning, ever burning for a tantalizing goal—
Lures and lacerates his soul.
Sets a challenge for his spirit,
Draws it higher when he's near it—
Makes a jungle, that he clear it;
Makes a desert, that he fear it
And subdue it if he can—
So doth Nature make a man.
Then, to test his spirit's wrath,
Hurls a mountain in his path—
Puts a bitter choice before him
And, relentless, standeth o'er him—
'Climb or perish!' So she says . . .
Watch her purpose, watch her ways!

"Nature's plan is wondrous kind
Could we understand her mind . . .
Fools are they who call her blind.
When his feet are torn and bleeding
Yet his spirit mounts unheeding.
All his higher powers speeding,
Blazing newer paths and fine;
When the force that is divine
Leaps to challenge every failure and his ardor still is sweet,
And love and hope are burning in the presence of defeat . . .
Lo, the crisis! Lo, the shout
That must call the leader out.
When the people need salvation
Doth he come to lead the nation . . .
Then doth Nature show her plan
When the world has found—a man!"

I

In the little story we are considering Jesus tells us there is a father and two sons, and he comes to one of them and says in the language of our text, "Son, go work today in my vineyard." And he was not a good boy. He was a spoiled lad. He had a rude, harsh, rebellious spirit. He lacked the filial spirit of obedient love, and he said, "I will not." But afterward "he repented himself." Please notice the peculiarity of that expression: "He repented himself." We sometimes get a wrong idea of repentance, as though it must come to us from without, some strange wind of the Holy Spirit that will sweep us off our feet and force us into repentance. That is a mistake. God will not force any sinner into repentance. He will send the still, small voice of conscience to speak to him, as He did to Elijah in the mountain cavern on Mount Horeb; or the spirit-burning message of some earnest preacher, as He did through Peter's lips on the day of Pentecost; but the sinner must repent *himself*. That is in your hands. Repentance, real Biblical repentance, is to stop doing evil and turn around and begin to do right. And that is what this boy did. No matter what your sin, if you will do that, the Holy Spirit will lead you through all mistakes and blunders of the head into salvation and to successful work in God's vineyard.

Simeon Blas was the owner of a cockpit in the

Philippines. He was an unusually bright and forceful man, but a wicked man. A missionary, Dr. Marvin Rader, came along preaching Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Simeon was captivated. He fell in love with Jesus, accepted Him, and went to work at once with all the ardor of his soul to win others to accept Christ. He was soon the leading spirit in his church.

And then one day a man came to Dr. Rader and said: "Do you know that your chief exhorter, your 'big man' in the church at Malabon, is also the big cock-fight man and gambler of the town? He owns the big cockpit of Malabon, and every morning after he gets through preaching he invites the crowd to the cock-fight and takes them over." That was a stunner for the new missionary. Here, as he found upon investigation, was his most powerful church member, the richest man in town, the most respected man in town, the man who had built the church with his own money, also the owner and manager of the town cockpit.

It was a hard thing to do, especially through an interpreter, but Dr. Rader called Simeon Blas into his home. He spent two hours with him one night trying to show him the church's view-point on the cockpit. It was absolutely like a flash out of a blue sky to Simeon. He had never thought of what he was doing as wrong. "Why, it's our national sport! The friars attend; they gamble on it; they own cockpits; they attend it after

mass. The Bible doesn't say that it is wrong, does it? I cannot find where it does." The poor fellow was bewildered. Nor could the missionary find any place in the Bible where it said that it was wrong to have a cockpit. Naturally it was not there. But after two hours Dr. Rader sent Simeon away with the matter deeply on his conscience, and to this day he cannot tell how he did it.

For a week Simeon came to Dr. Rader's home every night. He was fighting his great fight. The fight was between his cockpit and his Christ. Giving up the cockpit meant the loss of thousands of pesos a month to him. It was like an old tree tearing up its roots to move to new soil. Then suddenly he stopped coming.

When Dr. Rader found also that he had stopped coming to church, as he says, " My heart stood still. That meant ruin to our church, I was sure. If Simeon Blas stopped coming to church, it would end everything in that town, for he was the biggest man in the town!

" One night I went to church and Simeon was not there. He had been scheduled to speak. I said to one of the elders, ' Where is Simeon? ' He replied, ' Simeon told me as I came by his house that he was through with the church. He is not going to attend any more!' I struggled through the service, my heart sick. Dozens of men got up and walked out when Simeon did not preach. He was their idol.

"Two weeks passed. Simeon no longer came each evening to my house as in the old days. Our hearts were torn. We were utterly discouraged. Then one evening, as we sat eating our supper, I heard steps downstairs, and they sounded familiar. They came up the outside stairs. I knew by the steps that it was Simeon. He knocked and I called for him to enter. He stepped in. His face was worn and haggard. I knew that he had gone through a terrific struggle during those weeks that he had given up the church. It was all marked in lines on his fine face. He came over to me and took my hand in his. I can feel the grip yet. Then he looked down into my face with an unutterable question in his big brown eyes. I know now that he was saying through that look, 'I wonder, O missionary, if you will understand what I am going to say to you? I wonder if I can make you know, since we cannot speak each other's language?' Then with tears streaming over his brown, sun-burned cheeks, he broke into speech, trying to tell me in three languages what had happened to him.

"'Vamoose cockpit! Cockpit all gone! Jesus Christ has come into my heart forever! Cockpit no more! Jesus Christ everything now!' Then he sobbed aloud and so did I. I not only sobbed but I shouted! That man had actually sold every interest he had in that cockpit. He had won his battle. From that day to this he has been getting

richer and richer. He has been one of our most loyal preachers and best Christians. He gave up the cockpit for Christ; and some day that's what's going to happen all over the islands, thanks to our missionary work!"

Something like that happened to this boy Jesus tells us about, who went to work at last in his father's vineyard. When a sinner repents himself, God is always ready to forgive.

But there was a second boy, you say. Yes, I know, but he did not amount to much. I would not speak of him, only no doubt some of you are the living, breathing image of him, and unless you arouse yourself to repent and really get to work in God's vineyard, will never amount to any more than he did.

When the father came to the second son with the same command as he had given the first, " Son, go work today in my vineyard," he smiled genially and said, " I go, sir," but he never went. There are many like him today. They wish the church well, they say they are going to be Christians, but life is passing and they do nothing. They are like rotten logs, the more nails you drive in them, the more nails will come out. O man! woman! rouse out of your complacent lethargy before it is too late!

XI

THE BANQUET OF GOD:

Christ's Story of the King's Wedding Feast

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ready my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise; and the rest laid hold on his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them. But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests. But when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? . . . Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen."—Matthew 22:1-14.

WHATEVER historical meaning may have been communicated to the minds and hearts of those to whom Jesus first told this story, for us today it has one great, certain message. It speaks to us about the great

feast of salvation provided for us through the coming of Jesus Christ, the Gospel feast purchased by His birth and life and sacrificial death and resurrection from the dead. The generation of His own people who were bidden to the feast of mercy refused it and crucified the Lord of life and glory and hounded His disciples to death; but God's love for humanity was so deep and true that He has sent forth the Gospel mission to the ends of the earth, to all the partings of the ways of life, with the divine invitation to come to the feast of heaven's mercy. No man is so poor or low or ignorant or unworthy that he may not come if he will, for the invitation of God's love is without limit. "Whosoever will may come."

Let us consider the Gospel feast: let us study the menu and consider the food that waits on the table of God's banquet.

First, there is forgiveness for our sins. We have all broken God's law. We are sinners against God. We may forget it sometimes during the day, but at night, when we lie down to rest and seek death's twin brother, sleep, we are conscious that we are sinners against God and wish we were forgiven. In times of emergency, when sudden danger faces, we wish our sins were forgiven. Those brothers of Joseph who had sold their young brother to be a slave in Egypt, when in their great trouble, facing starvation, they came down to that same Egypt to buy corn to save their lives, and Joseph, though

unknown to them, spoke harshly and shut them up together, were true to human nature when they harked back in their memories to that sin of twenty or thirty years ago and said to each other, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear." That old sin, unforgiven, hung like a weight on their hearts, pushing them down.

Oh, if there were a market in any city where men could go and buy for money forgiveness of their sins, it would become a greater center and have a thousand times as many pilgrims as Mecca ever knew! There is no such market. You cannot buy at any price the pardon of God, but you may have free, without money and without price, the full forgiveness of your sins at the Banquet of God.

Yes, and the very next dish to forgiveness is joy. I have been permitted to see hundreds—aye! in the aggregate thousands—of men and women as they partook of that wonderful dish, the forgiveness of their sins, and I never saw one yet who did not immediately take the next dish—the dish of joy. I have seen them sometimes shout aloud the praises of God at that moment, and I have seen others just look up with shining, radiant faces that glowed with "a light that never was on sea or land," and others just cry happy tears mingled with smiles like the rainbow when God gives

sunshine after rain, but every one of them feasted on joy,—a joy unutterable and full of glory. If there were any manufacturing establishment in any land on earth that had a prescription for joy like that, this poor, sorrow-stricken world would build fleets of great ships and send them to the nearest ocean harbor, and build railroads to the very door, that might carry train loads and ship loads of joy to the broken hearts and despairing souls of men and women throughout the world. But there is no such manufactory. Thank God! you may have that perfect joy that casts out all fear and bids sorrow be gone and makes despair slink away and immortal hope spring anew from the dust without money and without price at this precious Banquet of God!

Hope is the next and third dish on this wonderful table. And as you partake of it everything seems possible. It is like Madeline Miller's song, *The Feel of Spring:*

"Spring's just around the corner,
I can feel it in the air!
A hushed, expectant feeling
Like the atmosphere of prayer.

"One God-filled gust
Of wind and the thrust
Of rain, quick-pelting, driving
Earth's sweet greenness into thriving,
Heaven's birds into sun-lit singing,
People's laughter into ringing,
New ambitions strongly springing—
Just one gale from God, old World,
And Spring's green flags will be unfurled.

" Spring's just around the corner,
I can feel it in the air!
A hushed, expectant feeling
Like the atmosphere of prayer."

It is an atmosphere like that a man or woman breathes into the nostrils of the soul when he or she has partaken of the forgiveness of God and feasted on " the joy of the Lord." The devil had been telling them that the Christian life was impossible for them, that they were too weak and wicked to rise up into the Christian realm of goodness and love. Now they know that he has lied to them all along. Now that their sins are forgiven, the horrible weight of their transgressions lifted away, and they are free from the galling chains of sinful habit and have entered into a glorious atmosphere of light and love and hope, they understand how Paul would say, " I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

And then the forgiven, joyous, hope-inspired soul eats gladly of the wonderful dish of Faith and goes forth to life's journey with a new and glorious guide and companion. One who had been at the Banquet of God and started out with Faith gives us his experience:

" Faith and I went forth to sow,
Early in the morning;
All the streams ran very low,
Doubt looked on with scorning.

" ' See,' he said, 'A barren field,
All the flowers are blighted;
Thorns alone the ground will yield;
Thus is faith requited.'

"'Nay,' said Faith, 'I hear the rain
Singing in the mountain,
And the dry and thirsty plain
Laughs to meet a fountain.'

"'Ha!' cried Doubt, 'that same old tune;
But if you remember,
Frost can show a smiling June
Frowning as December.'

"Then with fainting heart I thought,
'Faith and I must sever';
But with steadfast trust she wrought,
Whispering softly, 'Never!'

"Then I turned from Doubt, and lo!
By me stood the Master,
And I heard Him saying, 'Go!'
While Faith held me faster.

"Joyful now we onward press,
Faith and I together,
Sowing seed of righteousness
In all kinds of weather."

This song of the experience of the Christian soul in companionship with Christian faith suggests a very wonderful thing about the Banquet of God. It is a movable feast.

Do you recall that wonderful story of the exodus of the Hebrew children out of Egypt? how, to protect them from their enemies who followed after them to drive them back to the galling slavery from which God had called Moses to lead them, God intervened at the hour of their greatest need with a pillar of fire to guide them and put behind them a pillar of cloud that shielded them from their enemies? The record says: "And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of

cloud removed from before them, and stood behind them; and it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the darkness, yet it gave light by night: and the one came not near the other all the night." It is like that with this wonderful Banquet of God. It is a movable feast that follows with us all the way through the wilderness of life's journey and changes the wilderness experience into a joyous adventure.

On the tables of God's Banquet that will follow us through all the march of life there are dishes that meet the needs of every season of life and every emergency of life that may come upon us.

I was reading awhile ago the story of a Christian minister who had visited a leper colony which has been established in our own country to care for those who have contracted that most loathsome disease. His story warmed my heart and filled my eyes with happy tears as I realized that this movable Banquet of God kept pace even in that loneliest of human experiences and did not fail to make good Paul's wonderful promise when he says: "My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." The minister who tells this story says that it was an inspiration such as one does not get by preaching to the ordinary congregation. He began the meeting by asking for favorite hymns. The first song called for was *Standing on the Promises*

of Christ My Saviour. He looked at the man who called for it. His disease was in the advanced state. His face was horribly disfigured. The nose was gone. "Why do you like this hymn especially?" the minister asked. "Because I have nothing else to stand on; my case is hopeless; I have no friends, no prospects for anything in this life." The minister then asked, "Are the promises of Christ firm enough to stand on in your case?" His face beamed with joy as he replied, "They are stronger than the Republican Platform." (It was shortly after the Chicago Convention and the second day of the San Francisco Convention.) "How about the Democratic Platform?" shouted one from the other corner of the chapel. The minister now saw how keenly these men follow the political events of the day. But together they came to the conclusion that Christ's platform was sounder than that of any political party.

"Who has another favorite?" *Count Your Many Blessings; Name Them One by One,* a woman this time. "And why this song, sister?" "Because, when we count our blessings on our fingers, we soon find out that we have not enough fingers to hang them on." How refreshing to come to such a place and hear the inmates sing of *Showers of Blessing. Jesus, Lover of My Soul,* was called for by a mere youth. The minister looked at him and felt like weeping. He was well dressed, had an intelligent look, was well educated,

came out of a fine family. It is said of the Lord that He is no respecter of persons. Neither does leprosy regard blood, color of skin, social standing, age or beauty. The preacher said, "And this is the song that gives you the most comfort?" "Oh, yes," he replied, "I am young, a graduate of . . . College, my parents are well-to-do, but my disease is far advanced. 'Other Refuge have I none.'" "You all sing so earnestly I feel we ought to have another song." *I Need Thee Every Hour* was now called for, before the last word had passed his lips. He was a splendid specimen of physical manhood! To all appearances hale and hearty. "Brother Pastor, I want to tell you why I call for this song," he volunteered. "You see I am strong and look well, but I am diseased. I could be at home, but I love my family too much to expose them to the danger of leprosy. So when my case was diagnosed as leprosy, I came here at once. I may have to stay here ten years or longer before I am completely cured,—if then. When I think of my wife and baby, my heart nearly breaks and I lose courage. Then I turn to this song and feel better."

As I read that wonderful story of the sufficiency of the grace of God under all circumstances, I thanked God that the glorious Banquet of God is a movable feast that will never fail us on life's journey.

There is another feature of this wonderful ban-

quet of God's mercy. There are dishes there so full of vitamins, so full of the elixir of immortal life, that it changes the old order of the world's thinking. We look forward after eating at God's table, not toward death as a disaster, but toward it as a sunrise, a gateway into an eternal dawn.

David, even in his day, caught a glimpse of that glorious truth when he sang in his last poem, recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Second Samuel, singing of a good man's career, " He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, a morning without clouds."

John Ruskin had spiritual insight when he wrote, " Why should we wear black for the guests of God? " Why, indeed?

The house we live in must grow old, as houses will; but there need be no marks of age on the soul. I agree with Ida Thomas:

" Time makes wrinkles on the face,
That no person can erase;
Bends the back and halts the limb,
Causes eyesight to grow dim,
Takes our color and our grace,
Leads us paths we can't retrace.
Yet the fault is not alone
Time's. A part of it's our own,
For we fill our lives with worry,
Push and pull and fume and hurry.
Even at that Time is not kind,
As each one will, sometime, find.
But though he may yearly trace
His initials on our face,
Yet it does not matter much
Since our souls he cannot touch;
We can keep them, if we choose,
Young and fresh; they need not lose

One iota of the zest
Youth has planted in the breast.
Time can never get control
Of the wrinkles of the soul."

Age has food that youth and middle age cannot know. Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, so long editor of *The British Weekly,* that spiritual expert who had so rapturously feasted at the Banquet of God, wrote joyfully near the last of his feasting on this side the gates of dawn:

"High Thoughts!
They visit us;
In moments when the soul is dim and darkened
They come to bless,
After the vanities to which we hearkened.

"When weariness hath come upon the spirit
(Those hours of darkness which we all inherit),
Bursts there not through a glint of warm sunshine,
A winged thought which bids us not repine?

"In joy and gladness,
In mirth and sadness,
Come signs and tokens;
Life's angel brings
Upon its wings
Those bright communings
The soul doth keep—
Those thoughts of heaven so pure and deep."

And God links heaven up with earth so that it becomes not a strange region, but a glorious fulfillment of life's feast on earth. Clarence Flynn puts it beautifully clear in his song of *The Making of Heaven:*

"God took the paths we longed in vain to go,
And built a golden street beside a river.
He took the gates Time closed to us below,
And built a portal that shall stand forever.

"He took the longings that were vague and dim,
And hedged about by human limitation;
And built a world without a scar or rim
To be our everlasting habitation.

"He took the bitter pangs that life has cost;
Transformed them into joy, and song, and wonder.
He took the treasured blessings we have lost,
And planted them beside the waters yonder.

"He took our thoughts of hills, and woods, and streams;
And made them real, with added beauty given.
He took the shattered fragments of our dreams,
And built a city fair, and called it Heaven."

My friends, I call you with all my powers, with all the earnest passion of my soul, to come now to the "Banquet of God." All things are now ready. Every delicious dish that fed the soul of your mother and gave her the graces of tenderness and patient love, every dish that strengthened your noble Christian father to be a good man and true, is waiting on the table of divine mercy for you. The wedding garment waits in God's waiting room now for you. It is yours for the asking. Do not risk the outer darkness and the gnashing teeth of remorse without it; but now, while God's table waits and the very angels of God are waiting tenderly to serve you, come to the Banquet of God!

XII

THE FLAMING TORCH OF A TRIUMPHANT PERSONALITY:

Christ's Story of the Ten Virgins

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut. Afterwards come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you. I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."—Matthew 25: 1-13.

GIFFORD PINCHOT, Governor of Pennsylvania, relates in a magazine article the story of how he was once riding with a lumberman in the mountains of western North Carolina. The lumberman was not a great talker, and neither he nor Pinchot had said anything for a long time, when suddenly he burst out: "Say, there's a lot of good readin' in the Bible, ain't

there? " And among that good reading is this oft-repeated story of the Ten Virgins which Jesus told so long ago and which is as applicable to us as it was to the people to whom it was spoken.

These ten girls were to outward appearance as much alike as ten grains of corn shelled from the same ear. They were all virgins. They were all invited to the wedding. They were all dressed for the occasion. They all carried lamps trimmed and burning. They are all delayed on their way to the wedding festivities. They all very properly slept while there was nothing to do but wait for the coming of the bridgeroom.

But when the call came at midnight, " Behold the bridegroom cometh," and they awoke to that emergency, they immediately fell into two groups: five who had wisely made careful preparation and had brought sufficient oil in reserve, and five who had foolishly started out with insufficient oil and whose lamps were now gone out at midnight when stores were closed and there was no opportunity to buy. The five wise virgins went in triumphantly to the wedding, while the five foolish girls failed in disgrace and sorrow.

Jesus interprets this story by making it a warning to all who would serve Him through all time to be watchful and alert and make due preparation, so that whenever He shall call us we shall be ready to meet any emergency with honor and with joyous triumph.

In the light of this parable, how foolish and unprofitable the quarrel that has gone on at times for centuries as to whether our Lord is coming soon or may in His wisdom be long delayed. We all know that He will soon come to us, and that we know not the day nor the hour when the call may come. We may be sure also that there will be frequent emergencies in our own lives when we will have unexpected opportunities to be of service to our fellows and the age in which we live, if we are watchful and if we have built up a character and personality strong and rich in resources that can be drawn upon for the blessing of others.

I think we may get the greatest good from our study of this remarkable story by noting the characteristics of the personality suggested by it as the one that will triumph in the stress of life.

I

First, it must be an alert personality. If you will read the chapter immediately preceding this, you will note that the Master in His interpretation of the parable of the fig tree closes it with a similar warning: "Therefore, be ye also ready; For in an hour when ye think not the Son of man cometh."

And in the wonderful story of the talents related in this same chapter, Jesus emphasizes the need of an alert, wide-awake personality, always ready to find opportunities for serving Him in the

needs of our fellow-men. He assures us that in the great day of final accounting we shall be rewarded for finding and seizing upon opportunities of serving the very poorest of our fellow-men as though we were doing it for Christ Himself, and that He will say unto us: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

Nothing could portray to us the need of alertness more clearly than this dramatic picture of the Day of Judgment which Jesus places so graphically before our imagination. And how often these opportunities for service arise. Dr. A. Edwin Keigwin, the successful pastor for many years of the West End Presbyterian Church in New York City, tells this striking story which is a vivid illustration of our theme. Dr. Keigwin says:

"The other day I happened to be in Madison Square at the noon hour. The usual number of street meetings were in progress. I circulated about, curious to know what the other fellow was thinking. Directly across from the Metropolitan Tower, I came upon a group of extraordinary size which a long-haired individual was loudly haranguing. As I drew near he was shouting at the top of his voice: 'There is no God! There never was a God! I dare any one to stand up here on this box and prove that there's a God!' He paused, out of breath, and glared at the crowd. Nobody stirred. I confess it with personal shame. I suppose we were transfixed with horror at such a display of God-hating.

"Then, with a laugh, the speaker flung the taunt at the crowd: 'See, God hasn't a friend among you!'

"The words were scarcely off his tongue when a fresh young voice rang out, 'Yes, He has!' and a Hebrew lad elbowed his way to the center of the throng, where he was profusely, although sarcastically, welcomed by his challenger, and invited to mount the box and state his proofs.

"Straightening his somewhat stooped shoulders and throwing back his head he began: 'This guy says there ain't no God. He lies! *I know* there's a God. He says God hasn't a friend in this crowd. He lies! I am a friend of God's. He says no one can prove there's a God. He lies! I can prove it. God is in here right now (vigorously beating his breast). He is saying, "Give it to him, Ikey. That fellow can't put such stuff over on you and me."'

"It was a dramatic scene."

Then Dr. Keigwin goes on to say:

"All in a moment leadership had passed from the blatant unbeliever to the boy of faith and vision. The street orator was unable to recapture his crowd. Each attempt to speak was met by a broadside of ridicule. Finally, some one with imagination started the dear old Christian hymn, 'Nearer, my God, to Thee!' It swelled from lip to lip until a mighty chorus rolled up against the great tower, and broke in a spray of benediction upon every heart."

What would you have done if you had been there? Would you have been sufficiently alert to your business as the friend of God to have had the courage of that little East Side Jew to stand up for God when He was assailed? Surely we should be more alert than the Hebrew whose eyes have been holden to the beauty and glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

II

Our study should also suggest to us the need of a personality rich in reserve resources. It should open our eyes to the danger of a little-oil religion.

These five foolish virgins had lamps and they started out with a little oil. Their lamps were burning when they started and were still burning when the delay came. They were burning when they went to sleep. But when they awoke at midnight to the great emergency, their oil was all gone and their lamps had gone out.

How many people there are like that!

Some people have the little-oil religion of sentiment merely. It will flame up in their speech on occasions, and you would think they were real Christians, but it will not stand the midnight test.

Some people have the little-oil religion of feeling only. Some people are just a bundle of feelings. Now I am not saying anything against sentiment or feeling. Our hearts must be aroused and engaged with all the emotions and feeling in our love for Christ and our fellow-men; but that is not enough to carry us through. Our heads, our consciences, our deep determination, our wills to do our duty to God and Christ and our fellows, must possess our very souls if our religion is to endure the night of waiting.

Some have a little-oil religion of fear, and it is right that we fear God and proper that we fear to do evil, for punishment does wait on sin and disobedience; but something more powerful than fear, a faith and a love that is the master of fear, is necessary to make a triumphant Christian personality.

Some have a little-oil religion of ceremonial observance. On Sunday it is hard to tell them from real Christians, but on week days the difference is apparent.

Character alone can stand the real test of life. You cannot borrow or buy or steal, or for very long sham, character. Some people, like Robert Ingersoll, have sneered at this story of the ten virgins because the wise virgins did not divide their oil with their foolish sisters. But you cannot borrow character in any bank or exchange. It must be built up by every day's steadiness in resisting temptation and the doing of duty one day after another. It is so in every avenue of our life. And it is always the reserve resources that make the difference between a big personality and a weakling. You see it illustrated everywhere. One man is careless of his health, dissipates his energies, and when a great physical emergency comes he goes down in disaster. He has no endurance. He has wasted his resources. Another man is careful about what he eats and drinks, builds up his physical reserves through proper exercise and care, and when an accident or an epidemic comes, and the weaklings die, he survives, and the doctor says, " It was his strong constitution that pulled him through." He had oil in reserve in his vessel.

Dr. Robert Collyer tells how he once came across the Atlantic on an ocean steamship and for

most of the journey the weather was so pleasant and all things ran so easily that he and most of the passengers thought they were as good sailors as the captain. But when a great storm struck the vessel as they neared Cape Race, and all night long the staunch ship shuddered and panted through the wild waters, and when next morning, peering deckward, he saw the faithful captain standing by the mainmast with his arms twisted about the ropes, swinging in the tempest, watching it with steady eyes, alert and cheerful while others grovelled in the despair of seasickness, and knew that he had been on deck all night, turning his ship round in the teeth of the tempest and the trough of the sea so that she might escape the awful strain and the avalanche of waters which were filling other men with dismay,—then he knew the captain. The reserves were coming out. Here was a man nothing could daunt, and who, if the worst had come, would have seen first to the safety of his passengers and been the last man to leave the wreck. The weather-beaten old captain had reserve forces equal to the demand. He had oil stored up for the emergency.

We, too, must store up reserves of spiritual strength.

Do you recall that first Psalm of David's in the Book of Psalms, where he compares the righteous man to a tree planted by the river, whose leaves remain green when the drought turns all the rest

of the world brown? Thus we must run our roots deep into the Bible, and into habits of prayer and spiritual communion and fellowship, so that no matter who else fails and gives up in discouragement, we shall stand steadfast, and our lamp of hope and courage will not go out.

III

Our study suggests that the triumphant Christian must be a flaming torch for God and Christ for the blessing of humanity. We must watch for our Lord's call in the spirit of our Lord. I know of only one portrait of Jesus Christ drawn for us in the Bible. That is drawn by John, who was known in the group of Christ's personal friends as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." I suppose John knew Jesus more intimately than any other man. We ought, therefore, to have more confidence in his memory of the face and personality of Jesus than in the memory of any one else. Now if you turn to the first chapter of the Book of Revelation, a book written by John, you may see the picture which John carried in his memory of the Christ he had known and loved all his life. John had a vision which he records in these words:

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it

had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore."

When John saw that vision with its marvelous personality he knew that it was Jesus. But he never would have recognized that face and those eyes as the face and eyes of Jesus if he, himself, had not seen Jesus when His eyes flamed with fire. And he would never have recognized that voice as the voice of Jesus if he had not remembered when Jesus in His sublime earnestness and splendid passion spoke with a voice that had in it something of the thunder tones of an ocean-storm. He would not have recognized that shining face as the face of Jesus if he had not seen the face of Jesus when it glowed like the sun in its glory.

All the effeminate faces that artists and sculptors have given us of Jesus are untrue to John's memory of Him and untrue to the stories of Him that are told in the four Gospels. True, the Gospels portray the love and beauty and tenderness of Jesus to little children, His pity of the sick and the poor, and His sympathy for the fallen and the sorrowing. But it was the tenderness and pity and sympathy of a great, virile, flaming personality showing mercy to the needs of others.

It is our highest duty as well as our noblest privilege to build up and show to the world that

same kind of personality—a personality that is not only good, but aggressively good. We must set our faces against sin and evil with the same daring courage and with the same faith in God that Jesus did.

When the seventy came back from their mission of healing and mercy on which Christ had sent them, and rejoiced to Him that even the devils had been cast out at their word, Jesus said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven."

To the eye of Christ's faith, He beheld the final victory over evil. So we, too, may live so close to God that we shall go forth with flaming eyes and radiant faces where there is already reflected the victory of our faith.

Just now the heart and conscience of the whole civilized world seems to be awakening to a new horror of war and a new sense of our duty to banish it and make it impossible. It is high time that we were thus awakened to the cruel and wicked waste of war. An English chaplain in the great World War has published a volume of poems which he calls *The Sorrows of God,* in which he sings of war and its unutterable waste:

"Waste of Muscle, waste of Brain,
Waste of Patience, waste of Pain,
Waste of Manhood, waste of Health,
Waste of Beauty, waste of Wealth,
Waste of Blood, and waste of Tears,
Waste of Youth's most precious years,
Waste of ways the Saints have trod,
Waste of Glory, waste of God—
War!"

And from *The Sorrows of God* through a tender faith, Chaplain Studdert Kennedy comes at last to what in his soldier language he calls a comradeship with the "Comrade God":

"Only in Him can I find home to hide me,
Who on the Cross was slain to rise again,
Only with Him, my comrade, God, beside me,
Can I go forth to war with sin and pain."

When we face the sorrows and struggles of life in that fellowship, we come to know God and know that the heart of God is kind to us and is always seeking our good. At first when Chaplain Kennedy faced the sins of war he cried:

"How can it be that God can reign in glory,
Calmly content with what His love has done,
Reading unmoved the piteous shameful story,
All the vile deeds men do beneath the sun?

"Are there no tears in the heart of the Eternal?
Is there no pain to pierce the soul of God?
Then must He be a fiend of hell infernal,
Beating the earth to pieces with His rod."

But when he comes to know Jesus he understands and is able to sing:

"Father, if He, the Christ, were Thy Revealer,
Truly, the First Begotten of the Lord,
Then must Thou be a Suff'rer and a Healer,
Pierced to the heart by the sorrow of the sword.

"Then must it mean, not only that His sorrow
Smote Thee that once upon the lonely tree,
But that today, tonight, and on the morrow
Still it will come, O Gallant God, to Thee.

"Red with His blood the better day is dawning,
Pierced by His pain, the storm clouds roll apart,
Rings o'er the earth the message of the morning,
Still on the Cross the Saviour bares His heart.

"Give me, for light, the sunshine of Thy sorrow,
Give me for shelter shadow of Thy Cross,
Give me to share the glory of Thy morrow,
Gone from my heart the bitterness of Loss."

The men and women who live and fight in that spirit believe in the morning—the dawning of the better day—and give themselves unreservedly to bring it about.

A few weeks ago I told my wife, Florence Aiken Banks, the story of how, when my eldest daughter was a little child, she came downstairs after witnessing her first great thunder-storm at night, and said, "What was God trying to do last night? Was He making morning?" She took that story into her soul and went away and wrote this poem, which I pray God may use to impress us with its great message:

"A child of five, alone in her room,
Awoke at night with the thunder's boom.
Into the dark came the lightning's flash,
And the sky seemed rent with crash on crash.
She had never known a thunder-storm;
Nor watched the coming of early morn.
When she awoke, with the morning light,
She asked: 'What was that big noise last night?
Was God making morning?'

"I thought of mornings in the history of men;
How God rolls the storm clouds back for us. And then,
Columbus I saw, and all round him deep sea;
His men declaring, in their stern mutiny:
'There is nothing ahead, but a watery grave!
We're so lost, that not even God can save!'
Then lo! eager faces turned toward the prow!
Oh, joy! joy! There was land! And that was how
God made for mankind a morning.

"The night of slavery! Men and women with brain!
With brain and with souls, being bartered for gain!
I saw those black men tamed with the lash.
Then I heard again the thunder's crash.
As Abraham Lincoln, in homely might,
Split that dark sky with a piercing light,
That rent the chains, and to the slave
His everlasting freedom gave.
Behold, the black man's morning!

"And women! The mothers of humankind!
Fit only to be in the ranks behind!
Bearing the children, training the sons
To fill the places of mighty ones;
But herself unworthy of franchise. She
Had no right to say what the laws would be!
No voice for her! But today she stands
Holding the ballot in those powerful hands.
God made the woman's morning!

* * * * * * * * * *

"Intemperance passed! The saloons behind!
That is the morning we're waking to find,
Ushered in by God's good men and women, who've worked,
Who've given money, and life; who never have shirked
In lifting the clouds of drunkenness off;
Though opposed and jeered at—a sneer and a scoff!
Schools well filled and children well fed—
World Prohibition is just ahead!
God hastens the coming of morning!

"Myriads of mornings God waits to bestow.
As God-glimpsing mornings as is radio.
But He cannot trust us, till races have learned
To love one another. Till nations have turned
To Christ as the King of all kingdoms on earth—
Christianity binding the globe with its girth!
When, regardless of color, each man is our brother,
And, everywhere, men seek the good of each other.
Oh, help God in making that morning!"

XIII

MAN, GOD'S STEWARD:

Christ's Story of the Talents

"For it is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his ability; and he went on his journey. Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he also that received the two gained other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

"Now after a long time the lord of these servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

"And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath ten talents. For

unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth."—MATTHEW 25: 14-30.

THIS story which Jesus tells us so solemnly searches the hearts of every one of us. It is like the eyes of God looking down into our very souls. Hermann Hagerdorn sings of those searching eyes of God:

"I see them nightly in my sleep.
The eyes of God are very deep.
There is no cave, no sea that knows
So much of unplumbed depth as those,
Or guards with walls or specters dumb
Such treasures for the venturesome.

"I feel them burning on my back.
The eyes of God are very black.
There is no substance and no shade
So black as God His own eyes made;
In earth or heaven no night, no day
At once so black, so bright as day.

"I see them wheresoe'er I turn.
The eyes of God are very stern.
The eyes of God are golden fires
That kindle beacons, kindle pyres;
And where like slow moon-rays they pass
They burn up dead things as dry grass.

"They wait, and are not hard to find.
The eyes of God are very kind.
They have great pity for weak things
And joy in everything with wings;
And glow, beyond all telling bright,
Each time a brave soul dares a flight."

Ah! that last line tells of the great difference in men and women. The soul that dares to obey God—the soul that dares to fly aloft at God's

command—the five-talent man in Christ's great story—goes promptly to work to make the capital entrusted to him grow into still more. The two-talent man follows his example. But the one-talent man shirks his chance; not because he is alone; there are more one-talent men than any other kind. Once in a generation we have a thousand-talent man like Paul, but for the most part God sets us in small circles where there is only room for one talent to work to advantage. Sometimes if the one-talent man seizes his opportunity and turns over his capital rapidly he may grow into a five, ten, yes even into a thousand-talent man like Abraham Lincoln; but it is because of the wonderful willingness to seize with utter unselfishness his opportunities. Mrs. Sarah Martyn Wright sings truly that:

"Opportunity! It is a golden thing!
It comes to all, the high and low, the rich and poor,
From those who ignore, neglect it, it takes wing;
But love it, embrace it, and it will endure.

"Opportunity! It is a golden thing!
Go, give a smile and speak the kindly word,
Go, help discouraged ones, relieve the suffering
And speak a word of praise, where such is never heard.

"Opportunity! It is a golden thing!
To do a little of the Master's work.
Go, cheer the lonely ones, comfort the sorrowing,
And strive to make some one the better, happier.
For your brief span of life, this is to really live.

"O Opportunity! It is a golden thing!
It comes to all, the young and old, the rich and poor.
Then let us not neglect it, or it will take wing,
But love it, and embrace it, that it may endure.
O Opportunity, you are a blessed thing!"

The supreme failure of this man with one talent is that he refused his opportunity. He who knew what was in man and who spake as never man spake declares he was " slothful " as a part of his wickedness.

Emerson, one of the greatest makers of sublime phrases who has lived in the last thousand years, in referring to a typical sturdy country lad as being " worth a hundred of these city dolls," says of the youth he admires that he " walks abreast with his days; he does not postpone his life, but lives already."

That is the kind of life Jesus represents God as honoring. These men who won the plaudit, " Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy lord," were men who walked abreast of their days and seized each opportunity for investment of their talents as it arose.

Professor Henry Drummond used to throw year after year to each new crop of students at the University of Edinburgh this ringing challenge: " Gentlemen, do you mean business? " It is what I would like to throw straight at the heart of every man and woman of you. Do you mean business about your stewardship for God over the life he has given you?

There are two attitudes toward God seen constantly in the world: One man says, " I was not asked whether I would be born into the world or

not, and I will not assume any responsibility about a life concerning which I had no choice." That is exactly the attitude of this man Jesus tells us about, who went and dug a hole and hid his talent in the earth. He came to a bad ending, and so will every man or woman who follows his sulky, churlish example. Then there is another attitude. A man says, "Life is a new and wonderful thing. It is good to be alive and breathe air and feel the sunshine. It is good to have a chance at knowledge and self-development, a chance to be the very best man that it is possible to make out of me. Life is a glad, wonderful adventure. I am going to do my very best. I am grateful to God for giving me this glorious opportunity to seek to bring my mind and heart and manhood just as near as possible into the glorious likeness of Jesus Christ. My daily cry to heaven will be, 'God help me to be the very largest, kindest, noblest man that Thy infinite grace can make of me.'"

We have two examples of that man—the man with five talents and the man with two talents—in this story. They both came to the reckoning at the sunset of life, very happy and contented, and such shall be the joyous experience of every man or woman who follows their wise example. Let us think of some talents that are common to every one of us.

I

What are you doing with the manifold grace of God which is put at your disposal?

Peter says we are to live "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Dean Alford, the great English scholar, commenting on this phrase, says that "the manifold grace of God" is a very remarkable expression. The word "manifold" is the word which the Greeks used to express infinite variety of hue or design—the shiftings and glistenings of richly mingled colors or the dappled patterns of skillful embroidery. This unusual word which Peter uses to describe the grace of God put at the disposal of every one of us, suggests the beauty and riches of the infinite spiritual treasure which God puts within our reach to enlarge and strengthen our personality. Think for a moment of just one single color among the manifold grace of God—the privilege of prayer! What are you doing with the promises of God concerning prayer? "Ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." What would you think of the wisdom of a man who would allow his business to go into bankruptcy when he had unlimited credit in a strong, safe bank? Yet many men and women have gone into spiritual bankruptcy with the privilege of prayer unused.

What would you think of the ability of a general who would allow his army to be cut to pieces

or captured when he had a strong reserve army that could have saved him, but on which he never called for help? Yet many men and women are being cut to pieces by the evil assaults of Satan, and some are utterly captured and carried off into the bondage of wickedness, who could have brought to their help irresistible forces of righteousness through prayer, but went to their doom with prayerless lips. If that is your case, let me call you to your stewardship of this wonderful force of prayer. How keenly Paul felt the value of this force! He felt it so keenly that he was able to say in all assurance: "When I am weak, then am I strong." Satan is powerless to destroy a man like that. The man who trusts God and uses with perfect confidence his unlimited credit in the bank of heaven is invulnerable. He is more than a match for all the hosts of evil.

II

What are you doing with your power of sympathy and fellowship in making yourself a blessing to your fellow-men?

If you want to see what miracles can be wrought for good, through human sympathy and fellowship, study the life of Joseph in Egypt. Sold into Egypt, thrown into prison in disgrace, he still retained his human interest and sympathy with the men about him. It brought him into

touch with the king and brought him to honor and great opportunity to bless not only the people of Egypt, but his own fatherland.

Then came that great dramatic hour when his brothers were before him. They had been mean to him, unspeakably cruel and wicked. But now they were in trouble. Their wives and their children were hungry, in danger of starving, at home, and these men were wrung with anguish for them. Joseph's great heart responded in sympathy with their trouble. He fell on Benjamin's neck and wept in his arms and made himself known to them in tenderness and love. And when they were so ashamed and terror-stricken in memory of the evil they had done him that they could not speak, he comforted them and told them that while they meant evil to him, God had come to his help and turned it into blessing. And he went the round of those brothers, and kissed every one and wept tears of brotherly sympathy in their arms.

All of you have that same divine power of sympathy and brotherly fellowship in your nature! What are you doing with it? Are you letting it freeze up in your heart? Are you hiding it in the earth? There is that in it, if you will use it freely as Joseph did, to bring you to usefulness and honor before God and man, and to so enrich your life that you will be a blessing beyond your dreams to every man and woman you know.

III

What are you doing with your ability to lift up the heathen world to the salvation that is in Jesus Christ?

Bishop Frederick T. Keeney tells a wonderful story of a young Chinese Methodist preacher named Do Gieng. He was the first Chinese student to return to the Foochow Area with a Ph. D. from an American university. After graduating from the Anglo-Chinese college at Foochow, he hastened to America in further quest of knowledge. During his eight years in the United States he won his A. B. from Wesleyan University, B. D. from Drew Theological Seminary, A. M. from Columbia University, Ph. D. from New York University, and then found time to take several special courses in the Union Theological Seminary. Before leaving America a large industrial company for whom he worked several months last summer to earn money to pay for his return passage was so impressed with his ability that the manager offered him a salary of four thousand dollars per year for two years with the promise of an advance to nine thousand dollars if he would remain and enter into a contract for fifteen years. His modest reply was that he owed all he had to Christ and the church and he must hasten back to China to pay the debt.

On reaching Foochow his only request was to be sent to the place where he could do the most

good, irrespective of hard conditions, whereupon he was appointed to his present work in Kutien City at a salary of thirty dollars a month. No man in the Conference went to his task more cheerfully than he. On the way to his new appointment he was seized, beaten, and put in jail because he protested mildly when the boxes containing his beloved books were rudely opened by northern soldiers. But when released, he went on his way rejoicing, and only recently thanked Bishop Keeney for giving him such a splendid field for service. And listen to what the good bishop says of his work: "If one wishes to receive a charge from an electric battery and feel the dynamic of a life filled with a passion to do good, he needs to be introduced to Ciu Do Gieng. It may be difficult to find him, for in the city of Kutien, which is the center of his activities, he shifts his less than 100 pounds avoirdupois with such shuttle-like swiftness that one can hardly tell where he is most likely to be at any particular moment. Then beyond the city wall are two districts of the Foochow Conference reaching back four days' journey, over which he has charge of the religious education in the day schools, training classes for Bible women, and pastors' institutes. After working regularly from five o'clock in the morning until midnight, seven days a week, Do Gieng declares, 'I wish I could cut down my sleeping hours. Time flies faster than I can run.'

It is not strange that he is losing flesh, when often he takes time for only two meals a day. When told that he should eat regularly and more frequently, he replied, 'I can eat when I cannot do anything else. When I get down to skin and bones I shall cease getting thin.'"

Where can you find a better investment for time and eternity than to fit men like that to win souls to Jesus Christ? Already in less than a year Do Gieng has a Gospel team at work in each of the six wards of the city, besides a strong Gospel team working among the soldiers.

I pray God that this wonderful story may rouse us to immediate action. Remember, it is no mere philosophy. It is to real service of Christ that I am calling you. Picture Jesus anew to yourself:

"In the shop at Nazareth
Pungent cedar haunts the breath.
'Tis a low Eastern room,
Windowless, and touched with gloom.
Workman's bench and simple tools
Line the walls. Chests and stools,
Yoke of ox, and shaft of plow
Lie about the pavement now.

"In the room the Craftsman stands,
Stands and reaches out His hands.

"Let the shadows veil His face
If you must, and dimly trace
His workman's tunic, girt with bands
At His waist. But His hands—
Let the light play on them;
Marks of toil lay on them.
Paint with passion and with care
Every old scar showing there
Where a tool slipped and hurt;
Show each calious; be alert

For each deep line of toil.
Show the soil
Of the pitch, and the strength
Grip of helve gives at length.

"When night comes, and I turn
From my shop where I earn
Daily bread, let me see
Those dark hands; know that He
Shared my lot, every bit:
Was a man, every whit.

"Could I fear such a hand
Stretched toward me? Misunderstand
Or mistrust? Doubt that He
Meets me full in sympathy?
'Carpenter! hard like thine,
Is this hand, this of mine.
I reach out, gripping Thee,
Son of man, close to me,
Close and fast, fearlessly!"

No man has ever yielded to this appeal without success. No man or woman can reject it without peril.

It was one Sunday night in October, the year of the great Chicago fire. Dwight L. Moody had been preaching a series of sermons for five Sunday nights on the life of Christ,—beginning in Bethlehem. He had gotten Him along until He was in Pilate's hands, and his text was "What shall I then do with Jesus which is called Christ?" Here is Moody's own story of what I once heard the great evangelist say was his greatest mistake:

"I remember preaching in Chicago one night; it was a Sunday night in October. I had been preaching for five Sunday nights on the life of Jesus Christ. I had commenced clear back in Bethlehem, and had followed Him along until I got to the text: 'What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?' Christ was then in the hands of Pilate, and I made that night one of the greatest mistakes

of my life: I said to that audience, I want you to take this text home with you; and I gave that audience until next Sunday night to decide that question. And do you know from that night to this I have never been guilty of such an act.

"I have no right to give you another hour. As the messenger of God, I am to bring you to a decision, if I can, this very moment. I do not know what a night may bring forth. As I closed that meeting with those remarks, giving that audience a week to decide that question, the court-house bell, not more than half a block away from that hall, was tolling out the death-knell of that city. I did not know it then, and Mr. Sankey did not; and the last time his voice rang out in that hall he sang the words:

"'Today the Saviour calls:
For refuge fly;
The storm of justice falls,
And death is nigh.'

"And so it was. Little did we know what was going to take place. I went home that night, and before 12 o'clock that hall was in ashes; before 2 o'clock the church where I worshipped was in ashes; before 3 o'clock my own home was in ashes; and do you know, I have never met that audience since. Right around Farwell Hall there were quite a number of people perished in the flames, and I have very good reason to believe that some of those men who heard me that night perished that night; and one of them, in order to hide away from the flames, crawled into a great iron water-pipe and was roasted right near the hall.

"I want to urge you people tonight to settle this question: What will you do with the Son of God? Will you accept Him or will you reject Him? If you will receive Him here, He will receive you yonder. If you reject Him here, He will reject you yonder. If you confess Him here, He will confess you yonder. If you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ now, He will save you. Will you be saved?"

Some man or some woman says: "But I am not able to keep my decision. I have tried and failed." Oh, my friend, you need not go alone. Jesus will walk with you every step of the way from now until you are inside the gates of pearl, if you will ask Him. Let me give you testimony from a most distinguished man, the late Sir Ernest

Shackleton, who wrote a remarkable book, called *South,* describing his adventures at the South Pole. His ship was crushed in the ice, and with his crew he crept over perilous polar ice and open sea, leaving twenty-two men on a bare island while, with two other men, he sailed eight hundred miles in a little boat to South Georgia Island for relief. He saved his men, but only after cruel efforts and almost superhuman hardships. In the most thrilling passage in his book this remarkable explorer and scientific man tells how he and two men started to walk over ice-bound mountains for help. It was on the last and most terrible stage of their journey, and he relates that during the terrible ordeal of crossing glacial South Georgia with two of his men to seek a relief ship, it often seemed to him that there were four in the party. "Providence," he declared, "guided us across those snowy fields." Shackleton spoke to no one about the shadowy fourth form, but when the reaction came at Huvik whaling station, where the explorers lay down in soft and warm beds, Worsley, one of Shackleton's men, said to him: "Boss, I had a curious feeling on the march that there was another person with us." Crean, the other man, had also felt the presence of a fourth marcher.

The form of the fourth that was with Daniel's friends in the fiery furnace, and was with Shackleton and his friends on the polar ice, will be with you on every mile of the march toward heaven.

XIV

THE POPULAR MAN AT THE JUDGMENT:

Christ's Story of the Final Accounting

"But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."—Matthew 25: 31-40.

THE unthinking world expects the man who is self-conscious, self-careful, to win the prize. But in His picture of the final Judgment, Jesus puts the crown on the head of the man who has forgotten self and given himself up to service for others.

And in this present world, while the selfish man

may be successful in piling up stores of physical goods, he never wins the love and regard of his fellows. I am sure that former President Woodrow Wilson was right when he said: "Do you covet distinction? You will never get it by serving yourself. Do you covet honor? You will get it only as a servant of mankind."

That virile Hollander who came to America in his young boyhood and has so builded himself into usefulness as an American citizen, Edward W. Bok, brings out clearly in a great essay on service, which he calls "the greatest word in the English language," the strange fact that service for others in a great real way is nearly always unpopular at the time. He illustrates this truth in a very interesting way:

"Scale the word as you like, let it run the gamut of life in all its phases, from the lowest to the highest, and it holds its marvelous place in the lives of men.

"Naturally as one goes up the scale, the word assumes a more vital and far-reaching import. The greater the influence of the man who serves, the greater the extent of service. And so when a man, or a woman, reaches the point where his life moulds those of others, or the opinions of others, the word takes on a significance of incalculable value.

"It is then that the task of serving others becomes fraught with that marvelous experience and benefit which is born of despondency and discouragement. Washington served, and in a moment of discouragement said he would rather be in his grave than endure further the vilification that came to him. But he rallied and served. Abraham Lincoln was the embodiment of service—service to a cause, service to a people. No darker days ever came to a man than those which came to him in his trying days of service; not now when time has justified the service, but when he was serving. Vilified and heaped with calumny, he served his country and his God. So it was with Theodore Roosevelt. Glorified is he now, and by the same tongues which once slandered him, but

in his service he was the storm-center of abuse and misunderstanding.

"Service seems thankless, yet nothing in the lives of men is so fruitful of the largest returns to the server. But the server of the public must not expect, save in rare instances, to see the full fruit of his service. He serves one generation to benefit the next. The servitor sows while the served, a generation hence, reaps. The greater the service, the longer the necessary time for the extent of the service to be realized by the public and the harvest to be garnered. The foundation is often his to lay, but the finished structure he rarely sees."

And the first supreme illustration of this great truth we must find in Jesus Christ, who gave us the law of service. No other man ever served mankind as did Jesus, and His reward was the cross on Calvary. But He is winning, and all around the world hundreds of millions pay Him the tribute of loving devotion, and finally before an assembled universe He shall be proclaimed Lord over all.

This marvelous story of the Judgment makes life and its results very personal. It shows that no man or woman lives a really successful life who does not live according to the law of love. It makes very important what our personal attitude is toward individual men and women, even "the very least" men and women we meet on life's journey. I like very much the way Dr. Ernest Fremont Little puts it:

"'By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.' As you read these familiar words, what is your feeling? Is it not one of profound admiration for that ancient emigrant who obeyed his call to go into a new country, and who went forth not knowing what was in store for him?

"But now I am going to change this oft-quoted statement by introducing a single new word: By faith, Abraham Levinsky, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and he went out, not knowing whither he went. And now, what is your feeling? Do you feel the same admiration for Abraham Levinsky that you felt a moment ago for Abraham? Does this modern emigrant command as much of your respect as does the ancient? Or, do you say of Abraham that he was a gallant pioneer, and of Abraham Levinsky that he is nothing but a greasy Jew?"

It certainly solemnizes our thinking and exalts the dwellers in the congested sections of our great towns and cities in our imagination when we view them in the light of this story of the judgment. In the light of Christ's story we note that any real loving ministry we can give to the seemingly insignificant push-cart peddler crying his bananas, or the ash-heap woman sorting refuse, or the blind beggar on the street corner, Jesus Christ, the Divine Adventurer from heaven, who lived and died to save us from our sins, who came out of the grave conqueror over death, and who ascended to heaven and will preside over the Judgment, takes as though we were ministering to Him. How differently these people appear to us when we get that sublime picture of the Judgment to stand clear and steady in our vision.

Do you remember how by the banks of the river Chebar the prophet Ezekiel saw God interesting Himself among the captives? Not among the captors, but among the captives. Ah! that is a picture to call us to halt in much of our think-

ing and much of our conduct. "Among the captives I saw God!" And will we not always find God among the least and saddest of His children?

One of the most mysterious and talked-of events of the first years of the great World War was the strange apparition of an unexplained white-robed figure of a man which brought comfort to many a lonely soldier boy in the midst of hours of agony. The artist and the poet will never let those stories of "The White Comrade" die out of the memory of mankind. Robert Haven Schauffler, singing of *The White Comrade,* tells how the soldier to whom the apparition had ministered suddenly discovered that the Comrade, too, was hurt—

"Shot through the hands that were clasped in prayer!
Then, as the dark drops gathered there
And fell in the dirt,
The wounds of my friend
Seemed to me such as no man might bear;
Those bullet-holes in the patient hands
Seemed to transcend
All horrors that ever these war-drenched lands
Had known or would know till the mad world's end.
Then suddenly I was aware
That his feet had been wounded, too,
And dimming the white of his side
A dull stain grew.
'You are hurt, White Comrade!' I cried.
Already his words I foreknew:
'These are old wounds,' said he,
'But of late they have troubled me.'"

Oh, my soul, how that awful war with the waste of His "brethren" must have torn open afresh the wounds of Jesus received on the Cross of Calvary!

But we will always find Jesus in ministry like that. Christ has a new Christmas time, a new birth of God among men, wherever we give of ourselves to lift life's heavy load that is crushing one of His "brethren" into the dust. Wherever we show Him to weary eyes, He has a new birth of blessing. John Oxenham states it well:

"Wherever one repenting soul
Prays, in its agonies of pain,
By God's sweet grace to be made whole,—
There, Christ is born again.

"Wherever—bond of ancient thrall—
A strong soul bursts its shackling chain,
And upward strains to meet the Call,—
There, Christ is born again.

"Wherever vision of the Light
Disturbs the sleeping souls of men,
Night trails away its shadowy flight,—
And Christ is born again.

"Wherever soul in travail turns,
And climbs the barriers that constrain,
With steady cheer Hope's sweet lamp burns,—
And Christ is born again.

"Where one foul thing is purged away,
And life delivered of one strain,
Love rims with gold the coming day,—
And Christ is born again."

Christ's story makes it clear that if we are to be popular at the judgment we must make our lives here and now match with His own life of unselfish service for the weak and the needy. And is it not just as clear that that is the greatest gift we can make to the men and women of our time? To show them another life like that of Jesus is our highest privilege.

E. Stanley Jones, the missionary in India who last year thrust aside the Methodist Episcopacy which was offered him because of the picture in his mind and heart of the least of Christ's brethren whom he had a chance to serve, has been telling audiences through the land how he went to visit that unique saint, Mahatma Ghandi. And he said to Ghandi: "I am very anxious to see Christianity naturalized in India; not a foreign thing, a part of a foreign government, but a part of the national life of India, and contributing its power to the national uplift."

"Listen to what he said. He bowed his head for a moment in thought and prayer, I believe, and then he said to me, 'Mr. Jones, I would suggest to you four things if you are going to make Christianity naturalized. First, I would suggest that you folks, missionaries and all, must begin to live more like Jesus Christ.'

"I expected to be knocked down by criticism. I was pierced to the heart with that statement.

"'And second,' he said, 'I would suggest to you that you practice your religion without adulterating it or toning it down; take its high challenge; that is what it asks you to do. Don't water it down and explain it away. Take it in its simplicity and live it just as it is.'

"'Third,' he said, 'I would suggest that you emphasize love, for love is essential to Christianity; love is essential to religion.'

"And then he said, 'I would suggest fourth, that you study the non-Christian religions more systematically, and find out the good that is in them, in order to have a more sympathetic approach to the people. Put your thought on those four things.'

"The great throbbing heart of India speaks to us through that gentleman. Live more like Jesus Christ; practice it without toning it down; practice love, for love is the central thought in Christianity; and then, study the non-Christian religions more sympathetically, in order to have a more sympathetic approach to the people."

Oh, my friends, as I read that incident I said to my own heart: "God help me to live like Jesus, that I may be a helper of the men and women who need Him so greatly!" It is only as we live like Jesus that we can make Him real to the people we would lift up and save.

Another powerful personality for Jesus in that great mission field of India today, Bishop Fred Fisher, seeing the opening for Jesus in that dark land, sings out of a full heart:

"They come! the men of sorrows come,
Along the toilers' dusty road,
Forsaking superstition's load,
Escaping slavehood's bitter goad,
In faith, they come.

"They come! the careworn women come,
From out the hovel's prison door,
The smoke-stained walls and mud-dung floor,
Bowed down in grief and sorrow sore,
In hope, they come.

"They come! the naked children come,
Already weary, having toiled,
But eager, hopeful, bright, unspoiled,
Though born in squalor, souls unsoiled,
They, childlike, come.

"They come! the waking millions come,
They see the Cross where Jesus died,
Behold the wound-print in His side,
They turn to follow this dear Guide,
Redeemed, they come.

"They come! who greets them as they come?
Shall sons of God, touched from above,
Like palsied priests unworthy prove?
Oh, let us rise in Christ's great love,
And bid them come!"

May God inspire us and strengthen us to live like Jesus, and we will speedily capture the world for Him who said: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The most effective way to "lift up" Jesus before the gaze of our fellows is to live like Him.

In the light of Christ's wonderful story of the Judgment we must change all our ideas from the world's old standards of victory and come unreservedly to Christ's new standard of unselfishness. To my mind Rev. W. H. Arthur clearly conceives the Christ standard of victory:

"When I really am contented that my wish be set aside;
When I stifle selfish longings, when I triumph over pride;
When I'm willing, really willing, 'to be nothing' as we sing,
But 'a broken empty vessel' in the service of the King,
That is victory!

"When I calmly take unkindness and as meekly bear a sneer;
When I'm willing to relinquish all that earth is holding dear;
When the falseness of some dear one fails to waken in my heart

Any bitter, hard resentment, or to wing an angry dart,
That is victory!

"When in patient, loving silence I can hear my good made ill;
When I suffer any discord or annoyance, happy still;
Am content with any climate, any raiment, any food;
Bear with any interruption, company, or solitude—
That is victory!

"When I cease to long for earth's love, am content to be unknown;
When I smile if friends neglect me, happy in His love alone;
When I lose myself in Jesus and surroundings cease to be,
With their little jars and discords, able to discourage me—
That is victory!

"Lord, I cannot hope to triumph over every form of sin,
And to live but for Thy glory while my own will reigns within
So I bring my will to Thee, Lord, rule Thou me in all my ways,
And the glory shall be Thine, Lord, and the honor and the praise
And the victory!"

I covet for every one of you, as I covet for myself, that on this basis of complete surrender of our own wills we may go forth to live like Jesus among men, so that in that great day of accounting we may hear the Master say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

THE END

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